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ABSTRACT

The general plan of the 4-year (1966-1970) Educational Laboratory Theatre Project was to have theatre companies in Rhode Island, New Orleans, and Los Angeles give five matinee performances per week for high school students and three evening performances for adults in order to (1) make extensive use of professional theatre as an integral part of school curricula during school hours, (2) provide cultural enrichment to the community at large, and (3) encourage excellence in regional theatre. This first of four volumes of the Project's final report provides a brief history of the Project; information on the reception of the Project in the three sites; reactions of the advisory committee, students, educators, citizens, and theatre companies; summary statements from some of the major figures in the Project; and conclusions and recommendations. (See also TE 002 127-TE 002 129.) (MF)

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final report

educational laboratory
theatre project
1966-70

volume 1

reactions and assessments

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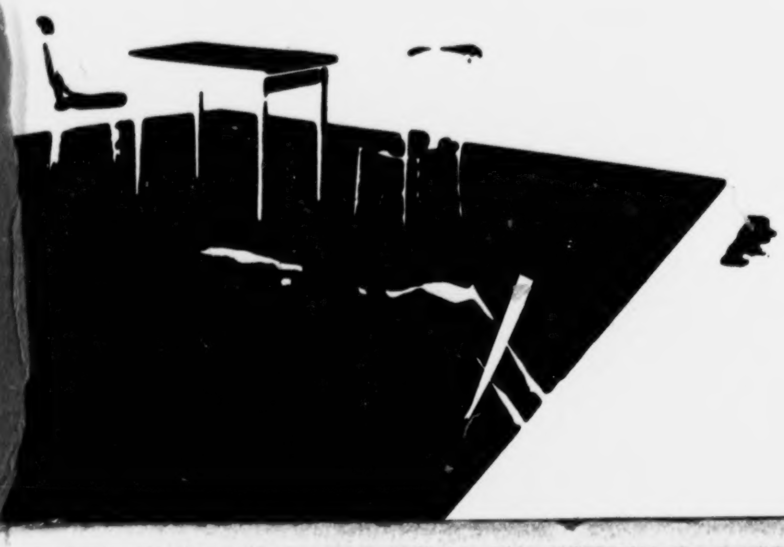

The four volumes of the Final Report of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project are:

- I - Reactions & Assessments
- II - Studies
- III - The Coordinator's Report on the ELT Project in Los Angeles
- IV - Professional Theatres in the Schools

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The Contents of the CEMREL Report

The Final Report on the ELT Project, as it was submitted to the U. S. Office of Education in September, 1970, consists of four volumes, and it is anticipated that several pamphlet-sized supplements, addressed to special audiences, will be forthcoming during the next year. The first volume of the Final Report, the present one, is entitled "Reactions and Assessments," and it contains summary histories of the three Project sites, the opinions of participants in the Project and observers of it, and, briefly, our conclusions and recommendations. The second volume, entitled "Studies," contains reports of the experimental and quasi-experimental investigations we carried out during the course of the Project. The third volume is authored, not by the CEMREL staff, but by the Coordinator of the ELT Project in Los Angeles, Dr. Hans Georg Stern. His report is included because the Los Angeles operation was the most complex, most troubled, the most embroiled in controversy, and, at the same time, through its involvement in racial relations and urban education, sociologically the most significant. The Project Coordinator had sources of information--particularly about the financial, contractual, and managerial aspects of the Project--that were not completely available to us, and we believe that Dr. Stern's report--the only such document produced by a Project official in any of the sites--is a valuable addition to the CEMREL report. We have not, it should be noted, made any attempt to reconcile Dr. Stern's views with our own in the several cases where we draw different conclusions from the same evidence.

The fourth volume in the report is primarily the work of Mrs. Mary Louise Barksdale, and it consists of two parts. The first is a critical account of alternatives of the ELT Project, which compares the Project with three other programs in which professional theatre has collaborated with an educational system. Each of the programs chosen for comparison--those involving the Minnesota Theatre Company, the Academy Theatre, and the Vanguard Theatre--differs in significant ways from the ELT Project and each has been in operation over a long enough period of time that its success can be judged. The second part of this fourth volume is a directory of professional theatre companies with educational relationships. The number of such school-theatre programs is surprisingly large, and, as we discovered in making our survey, most people actively engaged in school-theatre programs are unaware of the nature and extent of other programs. We hope that this directory can serve not only to inform, but to stimulate the exchange of information and experiences between programs.

The supplementary pamphlets mentioned above, which will be issued as they are completed in 1971, will be addressed to special audiences--educational researchers, theatre personnel, educators--and will be summaries of the lessons learned by us and the managers of the ELT Project during its span of life. The purpose of these pamphlets will be to enable others to profit from the experiences of the people and institutions that were involved in the ELT Project.

* * * * *

Introduction to Volume One

Aside from the first two chapters and the final one, this volume consists of the opinions of participants in the ELT Project. The opinions were obtained in many ways--as explained in the introductory notes to the several sections--and they have been edited with the intention of giving a fair representation of the range of opinions obtained in each of the sites from each category of informants.

We have found, through responses to our earlier reports on the Project, that many readers, especially those in English or drama education and the theatre, find more value in reading the actual words of the students, teachers, and other participants than in all of our percentages, chi squares, and summary tables. "Who cares what you think," seems to be the attitude, "what did the kids say?" To accomodate these readers, we have, in this volume, reprinted large numbers of quotations and paraphrased or summarized many more.

The reader will discover in these pages a great many opinions and conjectures and subjective reports dealing with the effects of the theatre experience upon adolescents. But he will find blessed little hard evidence on the matter. It may be good to start out with a consideration of why this should be the case.

The original objectives of the sponsors of the Project were to help existing regional theatres and to establish new ones, to introduce masses of students to good professional theatre, and to influence the ways that literature and drama were taught in the high schools. But the originators of the Project were also motivated by the assumption that the theatre experience would somehow change people in desirable ways, that teachers and students would, in ways not easy to specify, be better off for having seen good theatre.

Some of those involved in planning and managing the Project spoke of the theatre experience as one that could "humanize" both people and institutions; or they talked about the vapidity of a life without art in it; or they talked of richness of experience and empathy and insight and appreciation and creativity; or they talked of the sociological imperative to find constructive options to self-destructive uses of our ever-increasing amounts of leisure time. These people hoped that CEMREL would find ways to demonstrate that changes in these areas indeed came about as a result of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project.

We have not, of course, been able to do any such thing. With the rest of the human race, lettered and unlettered, we share the inability to operationalize or objectify such elusive and internal phenomena. What scientific understandings of the phenomenon of response to theatre that we were able to gather are to be found in the second volume of this report. But these will inevitably be disappointing to those who hoped, at the beginning of the Project, that a well-endowed research component could, in three years or so, get us further along the road to understanding the mysteries of aesthetic response than Aristotle and Hume and Kant and Croce have been able to do.

A few comments on the problems of doing research in the aesthetic and affective areas may put into perspective what we were and were not able to do. First of all, the distinction should be made between basic research directed toward an understanding of responses to the theatre and evaluative research directed toward an assessment of a theatre program. CEMREL was charged primarily with doing the latter, but from the beginning we were encouraged to do the former. Had we not had to compile a history of the Project, or to assess it, or to try to answer questions raised by the Project, and had we simply been able to use the Project as an occasion for basic research on aesthetic response, we might possibly have learned a bit more about the phenomena in question. But that is not certain.

Nontrivial changes in perceptions, tastes, and life styles that may be attributable to artistic experiences are qualitatively different from easily measurable (and often trivial) changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills. We know that some few students were dramatically changed by the ELT Project experiences. One boy in Rhode Island, for instance, a classic dropout, got turned on, began voluntarily working long hours in the theatre, and is now studying stagecraft at the American Academy in New York. But, for most people, the effects of an artistic experience, or a series of them, remain, as it were, a form of potential energy only, and have their effects far in the future, as they are impringed upon by and interact with other life experiences. The "residue" of an artistic experience may have no observable effect upon a person's life until there have been enough other experiences for a sort of critical mass to be reached. Or the artistic experience, alternatively, may itself be a catalytic agent, making sense out of a series of other sorts of experiences. In any case, it will be the extremely rare case when it is possible to attribute a change in a person to a particular set of aesthetic experiences. What changes do take place, even when they are relatively large ones, can probably be observed only over a long period of time and only by one who is intimately familiar with the individual in question. But, to return to the distinction made earlier between two types of research, the sort of clinical scrutiny of a small number of individuals that would be necessary to the detection of non-trivial effects of the Theatre Project was ruled out by the terms of the commission given to CEMREL, since we were working at a distance and since we were called on to assess the Project as a whole and to describe its effects upon masses of individuals and the institutions in which they worked and studied.

Most of the observers whom we quote in the following pages were willing to testify to their impressions that good things indeed did happen to teachers and students in the Project. Our own feeling is, and has been from the start, that, as desirable and important as it is to understand better the processes of aesthetic response, that quest for understanding need not be completed before one can advocate that students should be exposed to theatre. It is perfectly acceptable simply to state, as a matter of common experience, that one is better off for having seen really good theatre than for not having seen it. No research effort is necessary to "justify" spending money to send students to first rate professional theatre, and someone who has to be convinced that theatre is worthwhile, probably cannot be. (As Louis Armstrong is said to have replied to a lady who asked him what jazz was, "If you gotta ask, you ain't never gonna know.")

Unfortunately, the people who were interested in more important outcomes than the learning of facts and skills were outnumbered by those afflicted with the compulsion to deal with all things, including theatre experiences, in terms of immediate, narrowly utilitarian outcomes. These reductionists were not happy with the idea that students should attend theatre because it is good to attend theatre. So there were any number of appallingly bad lists of "objectives," spelling out just what the theatre experience was going to do for students. Most of these were so obviously based on miscomprehensions both of the theatre and of the processes of learning that it is a shame they were ever taken seriously. For instance, it was proposed that spending perhaps ten or twelve hours per year in the theatre was going to change the speech patterns of ghetto blacks or raise reading scores on standardized tests.[1]

---

[1] Aside from the fact that such objectives were, properly, irrelevant to the ELT Project, an evaluator would be most unwise to base an assessment of any theatre program on such goals, since he would thereby virtually guarantee a finding of "no difference" between students who were in the program and those who were not. For most students, a play or series of plays is a very weak stimulus toward change in, say, language patterns--much weaker, for instance, than years of direct classroom instruction in these skills. And such direct instruction often does not have the effects the theatre experience was called on by some people to have in almost no time in order to justify its existence.

* * * * *

Contents of the First Volume

The present volume is organized in this way. The first chapter is an overall history of the Project, from its inception in 1965 to the time of this writing, August, 1970. The second chapter is a report of the results of analyses of responses to an end-of-the-Project questionnaire that was distributed to students, teachers, and school principals during the final months of the Project in each of the three sites. Chapter Three is a collection of the site visit reports and summary reactions submitted by the educators, artists, and laymen who were members of the National Advisory Committee to the ELT Project. Chapter Four, the longest single section of the report, consists of quotations from the remarks and commentaries of students, educators, and citizens who were involved in or affected by the Project. Chapter Five contains quotations from, and summaries of, interviews with members of the resident theatre companies serving the Project in its various sites. Chapter Six contains copies of letters from the principal figures in the planning and management of the Project, which were received in response to our requests for summary evaluative statements. The final chapter consists of our own conclusions and our recommendations for changes that would have to be made in the basic conception of the ELT Project to make it optimally effective.

The reader who starts at the beginning of this volume will, as it were, watch the Project develop across time, through the eyes of various sorts of people. His impressions of the strengths and weaknesses of the Project will, in the course of his reading, be formed in somewhat the same way ours were, and perhaps our success in organizing the volume can be measured in terms of the number of our recommendations for improvement that the reader has anticipated before reaching the concluding chapter.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY THEATRE PROJECT

PART ONE

A brief history of the project

Alan Engelsman and
Nancy Schanbacher

Beginnings

Mention to any contemporary theatre historian a project in which U. S. government funds supported live professional productions in regional theatres around the country and he will probably respond, "You must be talking about the WPA Federal Theatre." Until recently, the Federal Theatre had indeed been the only large scale theatre project sponsored by our government. Consequently, it is important at the start of this history to make it clear that the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project differed completely from its earlier counterpart--differed in its origins, in its objectives, and in its scope. In fact, the only thing the two projects had in common was that they were supported by federal funds.

Nevertheless, an examination of the differences between the two projects may serve as a way of identifying what the ELT Project was and what it was not. The origins and initial objectives of the Federal Theatre are fairly clear cut: There was an economic depression and thousands of actors and other theatre people were out of work; the project was created to provide jobs and at the same time to give performers a sense of dignity doing the kind of work they were best qualified for. The origins of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project are much more obscure and the objectives more complex. Unlike 1935, 1965 was a time of relative affluence. It was also a time when government officials were disposed to feel that the arts had been overlooked as a national resource and as an educational tool. The post-Sputnik surge in federal attention to scientific endeavors had had its impact and, in reaction, the humanists were insisting that science, after all, wasn't everything. Then, too, President John F. Kennedy had given a new emphasis to "culture" in Washington and President Lyndon B. Johnson undoubtedly realized that his "Great Society" would have been severely criticized had he not made some acknowledgement to the role the arts play in such a society.

It is not surprising, then, that a National Council on the Arts was created in 1964 and that in September 1965 an act was signed into law creating the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities. An independent agency of the executive branch of the government, the Foundation's purpose was to develop and promote a "broadly conceived national policy of support for the humanities and the arts in the United States." The act also provided for a National Endowment for the Arts which would "support the development and growth of the arts and provide opportunities for wider appreciation of the arts and encourage excellence" with matching (and in some cases non-matching) grants. Thus, unlike the Federal Theatre which had been conceived as an answer to an urgent need, the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project was the by-product of a vague national feeling that the arts ought to play a more significant role in our lives.

The seed from which the ELT Project grew was, according to the recollections of those involved, probably a remark made by Roger L. Stevens, Chairman of the National Council on the Arts, at a Council meeting in the spring of 1965. In the course of discussion, Stevens had commented that he wished his teachers had made literature more interesting when he was in high school.

"Apparently, I hit a nerve," Stevens later recalled. "Everyone [on the Council] picked it up and we discussed the fact that classrooms are too often dull...that Shakespeare was a great writer and could be made appealing to the students."

From discussions among Council members that day emerged the idea that if students could attend live, professional theatre in connection with their studies of drama, it would help schools enliven the whole English curriculum as well as possibly build a broader audience for regional theatres.

The above objectives were completely in keeping with those of the National Endowment for the Arts, and, even before the official establishment of the Endowment, Stevens and Charles C. Mark, who were then serving as consultants on the arts to the President and who would become, respectively, Chairman and Director of Planning and Analysis for the Endowment, began discussing how theatre and education might be brought together. They developed the following memorandum which was sent to Miss Kathryn Bloom, Special Advisor on the Arts and Humanities in the U. S. Office of Education.

* * * * *

June 12, 1965

TO: KATHRYN BLOOM

FROM: ROGER STEVENS

SUBJECT: REPERTORY THEATRE AND ITS USE AS AN EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

1. It is proposed that three metropolitan locations be chosen in the country for a pilot program by using combined funds of the Office of Education and the Arts Foundation for repertory theatres, which would be available to schools in the surrounding areas.

2. These companies would be organized with professional directors and actors of the highest quality available.

3. Productions of Shakespeare, as well as other outstanding classics, would be performed in these theatres.

4. Daytime performances, Monday through Friday, would be performed for secondary school students free of charge. In order to give the actors a variety of audience, evening performances for adults on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday would be offered at a reasonable admission charge.

5. The purpose is for students to see well produced live theatrical performances of the classics which would hopefully create a much greater interest and impact on the part of the students for their classroom work.

6. Based on the experience of these pilot programs, it is hoped that the local school boards would use this plan throughout the country.

7. The plan would provide a repertory training for actors and directors as well as much needed employment. Presently, opportunities for developing the skills that come from the sound training in performing the classics, are extremely limited in this country, as is evidenced by the present dominence of the English actor on the American stage.

8. Guaranteed yearly employment would tend to attract finer actors and directors than are now available for theatres outside of New York.

9. Many cities would have available fine productions of the classics for adults which are not feasible today.

10. Since the development of a larger and more appreciative audience for the theatre is one of the primary goals of the Council, it is hoped that eventually a demand for good dramatic literature can be developed starting at the student level.

11. All of this would be done in close cooperation with the local educational programs of the cities selected.

12. Experiences have proven that lack of continued audience for repertory theatre throughout the week has made it difficult to maintain a permanent operation, but the funds available from the educational system would enable these companies to operate on a year round basis for the benefit of the entire community.

13. Since actors are skilled readers, part of this program would be to provide organized poetry and prose readings as supplemental aids to English study.

14. It should be pointed out that public schools have not hesitated in the past to provide elaborate well equipped facilities for the teaching of the sciences and languages, but no attempt has been made to provide the laboratories necessary for appreciation of English, which is the only required course for all students at all levels of education.

* * * * *

The memorandum again makes it clear that even at its inception the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project was a completely different enterprise from its better known predecessor, the Federal Theatre. Its central objective was not to provide jobs for hungry and needy actors but rather to provide theatre for culturally impoverished people--that is, both students and communities at large. Certainly, actors would benefit and so would theatre companies (and certainly Stevens and Mark knew that money was one means of "encouraging excellence" in regional theatre), but the emphasis in the memo was on "developing a larger and more appreciative audience" for theatre and on theatre's educational functions. The Project's scope was to be limited to three cities and its duration (though not specified in the memorandum other than by the words "pilot program") was also limited. This decidedly had not been the case with the Federal Theatre. Two other features of the proposed project were new and in no way related to earlier projects:

1) It would be the first arts project involving cooperative funding from two large federal agencies,

2) It would be the first program involving extensive use of professional theatre as an integral part of school curricula during school hours.

At a meeting on July 22, 1965, Office of Education representatives concluded that the proposed theatre project was compatible with the objectives of Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965--the establishing of innovative educational programs. They also felt some Title IV funds might be allotted on the basis that certain theatre operations were necessary preliminaries to the conducting of relevant research in the area of theatre education. A general plan was approved: each of three theatre companies would give five matinee performances per week for high school students and three evening performances for adults. The plan called for the theatres to be established in cities as different in location and character as possible.

The Project would be subsidized by the Office of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts as a three year pilot program. It was agreed that the Endowment would assume all pre-production expenses, including rehearsal salaries; that the Office of Education would provide funds to the local school systems to pay a small administrative staff, to buy admissions for students, to pay for the development and distribution of curriculum materials, to sponsor teacher workshops, and to provide bus transportation for students to and from the theatre. It was stipulated that local communities should provide the physical plant and funds for operating the "front of the theatre." (The government did not want to end up owning three theatre buildings after the three year project.)

The next step was for the two agencies to decide on sites for the theatres. Stevens and Mark considered the cultural climate and theatrical potential in various cities, while Miss Bloom and her assistant, Jack Morrison, familiarized themselves with the educational climates and institutions in these cities. The four agreed on an initial list of six cities--Atlanta, Cincinnati, Fort Worth, Los Angeles, Kansas City, and Providence--to which Mark and Morrison made numerous visits. Their procedure was to approach local cultural and educational leaders to inform them of the proposed Project in order to ascertain the sources and extent of possible community support. They sought to establish, especially, (1) the interest of the school board and community-at-large in such an undertaking, (2) the availability of a theatre or appropriate auditorium, (3) the feasibility of gearing the production to the local curricula in English, drama, and related studies, and (4) the existence of other local theatre activity which might be contributory or competitive.

Under Title III, program requests had to be initiated locally. Thus, if there was strong local interest in the proposed project, the school authorities pursued the matter further by contacting the USOE. Such interest was shown by numerous cities other than the first six considered; and Morrison, Mark, and other members of the two staffs made site visits to each of them.

After many further exploratory visits and communications, the cities of Providence and New Orleans were selected as project sites. Los Angeles was later added as the third city, but its Title III proposal was not received in time for the Office of Education to approve it for the 1966-67 school year.

Junius Eddy came into Miss Bloom's office to help work out the Title III proposals and act as a liaison between the two agencies and the projects. Eddy who had authored a slide-film presentation called "The Promise of PACE" for the USOE, was a logical choice. As he explained later, "I had, after all, practically lived with Title III for six months while doing the film." He took on the title of Project Coordinator under Miss Bloom and stayed with the project until September, 1969.[1]

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[1] Before going on to examine how the Project developed in each of the sites, it will help to identify some more of the people in Washington who were connected with the Project as a whole. Working closely with Roger Stevens and Charles Mark were members of the National Council on the Arts under the guidance of Stevens and its theatre chairman, Gregory Peck, and the Endowment's Director of Theatre and Dance Programs, Miss Ruth Mayleas. Stevens and Mark left the Endowment early in 1969, and President Richard Nixon named Miss Nancy Hanks, formerly executive head of the Associated Councils of the Arts, to replace Stevens. Kathryn Bloom left her post as Director of the Arts and Humanities Branch of the Office of Education in August of

As Project Coordinator, Eddy also helped administer Title IV funds which had been appropriated not only for operational costs but for specific research in relation to the project. Since there had never been a project like this and since existing research concerning aesthetic experiences was both sparse and inconclusive, the nature of the research could not at that time be spelled out in concrete terms; however, in July of 1966 CEMREL was asked to develop a research plan which would, in effect, assess the effectiveness of the pilot programs, develop instruments and materials which might be useful in assessing future programs, and identify areas of theatre-school related research that needed further investigation.

The total cost of the project over a span of four years was slightly over six million dollars. This may at first seem like a staggering figure, but when one considers that students received copies of the plays for study in class, were bussed to and from the theatres, had many opportunities to talk with and learn from actors in small group situations, that their teachers were given supportive curriculum materials and in many cases in-service training, that a considerable amount of valuable research was conducted in relation to the project, and the communities were given professional theatres, the cost per student attendance of about $6.70 is really quite a bargain. The precise amounts expended are summarized in Table 1; the total student attendance is charted later in this history.

Insert Table 1 Here

Shortly after the 1966 theatre seasons opened, the Office of Education and Endowment for the Arts jointly set up a committee comprised of specialists in theatre, education, and community leadership to act as advisors on the progress of the Laboratory Theatre Program. During the duration of the Project, these committee members made separate visits to the three sites and reported back on such things as quality of productions, relationships between theatres and schools, quality and type of curriculum materials and various workshops, and responses and attitudes within the community. At the times noted, the following were members of the Advisory Committee:

1968, and Dr. Harold Arberg, another art specialist in the program, became the acting director. In the fall of 1969 Junius Eddy became a program advisor for the Ford Foundation, and he was replaced by Eugene Wenner, formerly of the State Department of Education in Pennsylvania.

TABLE 1. Government Grants to
Each ELT Project Site, by Seasons
and by Source of Funds

NEW ORLEANS	O.E. Title III	Title IV	Nat'l. Endmt
First Season	$295,589	176,000	165,000
Second Season	290,635	165,000	165,000
Third Season	311,000	119,000	165,000
Total from each source	897,224	460,000	495,000
RHODE ISLAND			
First Season	$300,000	170,153	165,000
Second Season	301,136	170,000	123,000
Third Season	250,000	154,185	165,000
Total from each source	851,136	494,338	453,000
LOS ANGELES			
First Season	$473,358	176,000	165,000
Second Season	400,000	160,000	165,000
Third Season	187,000	155,000	165,000
Total from each source	1,060,358	491,000	495,000
Grand Total from each source	2,808,718	1,445,338	1,443,000

GRAND TOTAL $5,697,056 (This does not include funds for the research component)

Miss Adelaide Cherbonnier (1966-68), St. Louis civic leader who was instrumental in the formation of the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis.

Mrs. Marcelle Felser (1966-70) producer-director of the Vanguard Project Division of the Pittsburgh Playhouse.

Dr. Jack Morrison (1966-70) formerly of USOE, now Dean of Fine Arts, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

Mr. Wallace Smith (1966-70) Chairman Department of Performing Arts at Evanston Township High School, Evanston, Illinois.

Mr. Bernard Tanner (1966-67) English Department Chairman, Cubberly School, Palo Alto, California.

Mrs. Gladys Veidemanis (1968-70) English Department Chairman, Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

A summary of the reports of the Advisory Committee members is included in this volume.

Rhode Island: Getting the Grant

In August, 1762, an act to prevent "stage plays and other theatrical entertainments in this colony" was proclaimed through the streets of Providence to the beat of a drum.

The petition which brought about the prohibition of theatre in 1762 was in dramatic contrast to a petition to the state legislature in the spring of 1969 begging for support of Project Discovery--Rhode Island's Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. The former petition had carried 254 names (all apparently in one handwriting); the latter had many thousands of signatures from citizens in all walks of life, and it resulted in the governor's providing $40,000 to administer the project into its fourth year--the first without federal subsidy.

The history of theatre in Rhode Island between 1762 and the present is a full one which includes Puritan suppression, college theatricals, pre-Broadway try-outs, summer theatres and the Newport festivals, but certainly one of the most significant chapters of that history was the period from September 1966 to June 1969 when the Trinity Square Players presented 440 performances to over 350,000 student viewers--a period climaxed by the "Save Project Discovery" petition mentioned above.

As noted earlier, Providence was one of the cities originally considered for the Laboratory Theatre Project. Dr. Charles A. O'Connor, Superintendent of Schools in Providence, learned of the proposal early in the fall of 1965 and began investigating what conditions existed that would make Providence a logical choice. Other interested people who were exploring the possibilities of the Project at this time were the late Representative John E. Fogarty of Providence, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Appropriations for Health, Education and Welfare, Senator Claiborne Pell, and the Rhode Island State Commissioner of Education, Dr. William Robinson.

One obvious problem was that Providence was not as large a city as the others under consideration and consequently would not have as large a student population. However, the state of Rhode Island is the nearest thing to a city-state this country has. It is highly urbanized with less than 1% of the male labor force engaged in agriculture and is, of course, extremely compact: the greatest distance from north to south in Rhode Island is 48 miles and from east to west, 37 miles. It was possible, then, for the project to service the whole state, instead of just the city of Providence.

One asset recommending Rhode Island was the Trinity Square Repertory Company. Trinity Square began in 1963 when a Providence attorney, Milton Stanzler, brought together a group of amateur actors to produce plays in a 300-seat theatre (Trinity Theatre in the Square) in the Trinity Union Methodist Church. In January 1963, the Foundation for Repertory Theatre of Rhode Island was organized as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization governed by a board of lay persons from throughout the state to develop repertory theatre for Rhode Island. Stanzler served as its president.

The following year, Trinity Square Repertory Theatre was organized; and in May, Adrian Hall, who had directed Orpheus Descending for the theatre in 1963, was hired as artistic director. He brought with him several persons with whom he had previously worked at the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, including Richard Cumming, a musician and composer, and later, John McQuiggan, who was to serve as producing director.

However, a distinct problem was the 300-seat Trinity Square Theatre. Clearly a larger theatre was needed to adequately accommodate the anticipated thousands of students. One such theatre was the Albee, an old vaudeville house which had been converted to a movie theatre. Other possibilities were auditoriums in the various colleges located near or in the city. The possibility that something could be worked out was reinforced by the fact that the Trinity Square Players had, with the aid of Title III funding and a Rockefeller grant, performed Twelfth Night before over 30,000 students during its 1965-66 season. In addition this was a good indication of school and community interest in involving education with the arts.

Jack Morrison and Charles Mark visited Providence in early October, 1965 and discreetly tried to sound out community leaders. They found the interest there extremely high and noted indications that "the local leadership will support the project in every way possible." In addition, Rhode Island provided an interesting ethnic setting for the project. Sixty percent of the people are Roman Catholic, and it has the highest percentage of foreign-born citizens of any state. Because of the early presence of a large working immigrant population, the southern Negro emigrant never was attracted to the state and the relatively small Negro population is a stable one. Other non-whites include American Indians and Asians. As one would expect, the different ethnic groups are characterized by concentration in specific communities, and a pattern of ethnic, racial and class segregation is quite visible in the state today.

Early in 1966, Gregory Peck, a member of the Council on the Arts, was touring the country with his wife, visiting regional theatres for a report to the Arts Council. At that time, his study of theatres had nothing to do with the proposed Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. However, Peck was impressed with a couple of regional theatres--one being Trinity Square Repertory Company in Providence.

As Peck recalled, "From the theatre point of view, Providence with its Trinity Square Repertory Company seemed more and more logical" as a site for the ELT Project. "It was a good company, but needed improving; it was located near New York with all of that city's artistic talents; and the community, theatre and schools wanted the Project badly."

Meanwhile, Dr. O'Connor was working through the state Advisory Committee of Superintendents, the Rhode Island State Department of Education, the Catholic Schools officials of Providence, the Rhode Island Fine Arts Council, and several other organizations to develop a feesible plan for the state's participation in the Project. Dr. Albert Bush-Brown, president of the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence and a member of the National Council on the Arts, was instrumental in working out an agreement for the Trinity Square Players to use RISD's auditorium at a nominal fee. It was decided to make the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project available to all the high school students in the state. This would include every pupil in grades 10-12 in public, private, and parochial schools, a total of 74 schools and over 35,000 students. The 31 public school districts involved joined Providence in the application for Title III funds. Dr. O'Connor did a large part of the necessary negotiating and got the Rhode Island proposal in shape for the May 25th, 1966, filing deadline for Title III funds from the USOE. The proposal was subsequently accepted and Providence became one of the ELT sites.

Rhode Island: The First Year

During the summer and early fall of 1966 a number of people in Rhode Island suddenly found themselves responsible for making decisions and planning activities which would affect the education and experience of some 35,000 students from 74 schools scattered all over Rhode

Island. Dr. O'Connor appointed an advisory committee of representative school superintendents from throughout the state and asked Dr. Ralph W. Wilkins to serve as Acting Director of "Project Discovery" (Rhode Island's name for the Laboratory Theatre Project). To Dr. Wilkins fell the task of scheduling and coordinating the bussing of students to and from the theatre. There were few problems for schools in or near Providence (except the very large ones), but for the one on Block Island or those near the southwestern boarder of the state Dr. Wilkins was sometimes faced with new and unusual logistical problems.

Meanwhile, after consulting with the Advisory Committee, Adrian Hall and John McQuiggan were selecting plays for the fall season. They traveled to New York to audition actors and to negotiate an increase of the basic equity company from about ten to thirty. Other summer activities involved the remodeling of the School of Design theatre including the installation of new seats, additional lighting and other equipment. Then in September rehearsals commenced for the first Project Discovery play, George Bernard Shaw's Saint Joan.

Richard Cumming became Director of Educational Services for Trinity Square and to him fell the task of preparing study portfolios for the 586 English and drama teachers across the state. In the Saint Joan packet, for instance, were a copy of the play, a four page pamphlet detailing historical data about Joan of Arc, a four page biography of Shaw, bulletin board display material including photos, facsimiles, costume sketches, etc., a pamphlet related to the play itself, additional excerpts from Shaw, a chronology of his works, a bibliography, and a list of additional educational services such as films and recordings, available on request. Cumming had been on vacation in Europe and barely got the first packet out before the play opened in October. However similar packets for the remaining plays were usually sent to schools a month prior to performances, and student copies of the plays were available to schools upon request.

In addition to preparing the portfolios, Cumming arranged for school visits by the actors and other theatre personnel. Sometimes the actors would talk with students before they went to see a play; at other times they answered questions afterward. At first the visits consisted mostly of loosely organized panel discussions, but later in the season there were many more formal presentations. Over 100 such visits were made during the first year. Cumming himself (and/or his assistant Mary Wrubel) visited all 74 participating schools during September and October to help explain what Project Discovery was all about and to talk with the teachers and determine what it was they most wanted in the way of educational services.

It would be false to paint a totally rosy picture of these beginning months. There were some internal conflicts in the theatre company, a number of unresolved questions about scheduling, many failures in school-theatre communication, and the general confusion that one might expect at the commencement of a project of these proportions.

Nevertheless, on October 4, 1966 the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project had its official inauguration. James T. Kaull in the Providence Evening Bulletin announced it this way:

> A fat French squire bellowed for some eggs, 1,000 pupils of Hope High School laughed at his antics and the nation's most unusual experiment in "mass theatre" was launched in Rhode Island today.

There were unsophisticated hoots and catcalls at that first performance, but there were reactions at the other end of the spectrum, too. Several schools after seeing Saint Joan reported the establishment of drama clubs directly inspired by their theatre experience. When the play opened to the general public the following week it received favorable, (though reserved) reviews:

> ...this Saint Joan is a solid production, not quite as brilliant as some previous Trinity presentations, but still strong enough overall to indicate good things to come.

The second Project Discovery play, O'Neill's Ah, Wilderness! opened at the Rhode Island School of Design theatre in December and received similar reviews. This production was directed by Rocco Bufano. Henry Butler, an O'Neill scholar as well as an actor and director, made over 25 school visits to lecture on O'Neill. The production caused a slight stir when one school superintendent refused to let his students attend the play because he found it "raunchy." However over 30,000 other youngsters saw Ah, Wilderness! and cheered it.

Running simultaneously at the smaller Trinity Square Playhouse was Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire. This play, directed by Adrian Hall, received strong critical acclaim and a number of student reporters were invited to attend a matinee performance after which they had a chance to talk with the actors. Other student groups attended evening performances at their own expense. At this point in the season 42 actors were working with the company because a third play, a musical version of The Grass Harp by Truman Capote, was also in rehearsal. Like "Streetcar," the musical was being produced for the small stage as a part of the regular subscription series but not as a part of the Project Discovery season.

The next Project play was Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. It was mounted and played "with gusto." Directed by Louis Beachner, it began its run early in March of 1967. Actually the production had begun under the direction of Rocco Bufano, but he, along with John McQuiggan, had resigned from the Repertory Company in January. McQuiggan was apparently frustrated by his duties on the business side of the theatre and disappointed that he had not been allowed to handle more of the artistic duties. His departure left Trinity Square in a maze of bookkeeping problems that continued to plague the company for some time.

In February, 1967, Superintendent O'Connor appointed a drama teacher, Bernard Masterson, to fill the position of Educational Coordinator for the schools. A personable young man, Masterson was already familiar with many of the drama teachers and existing high school drama programs throughout the state. Like Cumming he traveled to most of the schools and tried to learn what the teachers felt was working well and what in their opinion could be improved about the Project. The three most repeated teacher complaints were that they had not been consulted about play selection, that the scheduling of afternoon performances was inconvenient, and that the theatre etiquette of some students was often deplorable.

Few of the teachers complained about the choice of A Midsummer Night's Dream as one of the season's offerings, and it was a popular success with the students as well. An article in the Providence Evening Bulletin reported the following incident:

> Because a snowstorm prevented [one] school from seeing A Midsummer Night's Dream, students and teachers alike bombarded Trinity Square with pleas to reschedule the performance of the Shakespeare play for them...One senior...expressed himself as follows: "In the past I along with my classmates have enjoyed the two plays that we have attended. We really enjoy plays at Trinity Square. Speaking for myself, until I saw Saint Joan, I figured that [plays] were not much more appealing than an opera. After seeing Saint Joan, I saw A Streetcar Named Desire and took my parents to see Ah, Wilderness!"

Unfortunately it was impossible to reschedule the performance because the sets had been removed and the School of Design was at that point using the auditorium.

Back at their own 300 seat theatre the Trinity Square Players were presenting Harold Pinter's The Birthday Party and beginning rehearsals for the final Project Discovery offering, The Three Sisters by Anton Chekhov. The Birthday Party, along with two one-acts, "Dutchman" by LeRoi Jones and "The Questions" by John Hawkes, which were offered later in the spring, rounded out the company's non-project offerings and added a touch of avant-garde theatre to the season.

It was at about this time also, that Richard Cumming asked one of the actresses, Joanna Featherstone, to develop a program which would be suitable not only for the high schools, but for some junior highs and grade schools as well. One of his objectives was to give youngsters who were not yet a part of the project some advance idea of what the theatre is all about, to let them sense the excitement that a talented actress can generate in a "live" presentation. Another objective was to give black children a greater sense of identity with the theatre and a greater sense of racial pride. There had been black performers in the first year's offerings, but they were in a distinct minority. Miss Featherstone, a Negro herself, toured the schools with a program devoted to readings from poems, songs, and essays by American Negro authors. She invariably involved her audiences by asking them to clap and join in with choral responses, and her visits inspired an avalanche of letters and several standing ovations.

Cumming continued the other school services as well. There were panel discussions after shows, tours backstage, visits to the shops where scenery and costumes were designed, and press conferences. Henry Butler visited additional high schools and, this time, gave students information about Anton Chekhov prior to their seeing The Three Sisters.

Three Sisters was glowingly reviewed by the press, but it received a very lukewarm, if not hostile, reception from the English teachers. They felt this was a poor play to offer students in the Project's first year and claimed that most of their students were bored and unable to comprehend the subtleties of Chekhov's drama.

Many of the teachers had already expressed their dissatisfaction with the play choices to Bernard Masterson, the Educational Coordinator, and he in turn distributed a questionnaire asking teachers and administrators what plays they would like to see chosen. From their responses he amassed a staggering list of titles. Masterson pursued the matter of play selection with further tabulations and panel discussions and precipitated a conflict with Trinity Square artistic director, Adrian Hall, who insisted that the ultimate selection of plays must remain in his control. In a newspaper interview Hall is quoted as saying:

> It's terribly important we don't offend the educators, but terribly important, too, that the Project isn't entirely formed by educators. About the worst thing that could happen would be for it to be put in the hands of lots of committees.

Because of this conflict, and for several other reasons, Masterson was transferred to another assignment at the end of the first year of Project Discovery.

Undoubtedly, things could have gone more smoothly that first year. There was a great deal of confusion and several instances of the left hand not knowing what the right hand was doing. Mrs. Marion Simon, administrative assistant to Adrian Hall, reflecting back on the initial Project season, noted that the early groundwork necessary to make the program function smoothly--the details that had to be worked out between Trinity Square and the administrators and teachers--was constantly time consuming and harassing and resulted in several mutual misunderstandings. In spite of Richard Cumming's efforts the Repertory Company was almost totally unaware of how schools operated, and the schools knew nothing of the theatre company's problems. Neither group, of course, had done anything like this before. By the following year, Mrs. Simon noted, most of the problems had been resolved successfully.

New Orleans: Getting the Grant

In 1791 six itinerant French actors from Santo Domingo, led by a man named Tabary, came to New Orleans and established what can be called the first professional theatre company in the Crescent City. Tabary's group performed in French, however, and it wasn't until 20 years later that an English-speaking company was established by an American, William Duff. Then in 1819 James H. Caldwell, an Englishman whose company had been touring Virginia, decided that the West was a potentially lucrative market for a theatre entrepreneur. Caldwell boarded his troupe of 23 players on a boat and told them that their destination was New Orleans. Though the actors were unhappy about going to such a remote territory they stayed with their leader and arrived early in January, 1820. From that time until 1833 Caldwell, with New Orleans as a base, dominated theatrical circles in the entire Mississippi Valley.

In 1966 another well regarded theatre organizer and director, Stuart Vaughan, brought a troupe of professional actors to New Orleans. Like his predecessors, Vaughan had been attracted to the city because of its charm, the cultural potential that he felt it possessed, and the challenges that it offered. Unlike them, he also had the inducement of a substantial federal grant (though it carried with it the responsibility of presenting four plays each year to an audience of 35 to 40,000 high school students). Some natives claim that Vaughan remained an "outsider" and never firmly established his roots in their city during his three years as Producing Director of Repertory Theatre, New Orleans, but none can deny that he brought the Crescent City its first totally professional resident theatre in over 40 years.

New Orleans was not one of the first cities considered for the Laboratory Theatre Project, and the fact that it was eventually chosen may be attributed to the energies and efforts of a dozen or so interested and persistent individuals. Mrs. Edwin H. Blum, long active in Louisiana cultural, educational and charitable endeavors, may perhaps be credited as the initiator and prime motivator of the New Orleans' project. Mrs. Blum who learned of the Project from Roger Stevens at the end of January, 1966, took the lead in pulling local forces together in time to prepare a formal proposal by the May 25th deadline for Title III applications. She contacted Orleans Parish Public School Superintendent Dr. Carl J. Dolce, who responded favorably and put his staff to work on the proposal. During February, Mrs. Blum and another civic leader, Mrs. Frank P. Stubbs, III, called at the National Endowment and at the Office of Education in Washington for additional information, and they also enlisted the support of Louisiana Congressmen Hale Boggs and Edwin Edwards and Senators Russell Long and Allen Ellender.

Mrs. Blum persuaded Stevens to speak in New Orleans on April 15th at a banquet sponsored by the Louisiana Council for Music and Performing Arts, Incorporated, (LCMPA) of which Mrs. Blum was a founder. On that visit, she arranged for him to inspect the Civic Theatre as a possible home for a theatre company. Stevens termed the Civic adequate but over-priced. However, the next day he phoned Mrs. Blum and told her that, if she really wanted the project so badly, she should go ahead with plans for it, contingent upon the school system's meeting the May 25th deadline.

The school officials were excited about the possibilities of the project, but some were bothered that it had not been locally conceived. The fact that the idea originated in Washington tended to make local administrators feel they had less control over the project and gave them less of a personal stake in making it operate efficiently. Some consideration was given to applying for a planning grant under Title III so that New Orleans might work out its own theatre-and-education program, but the momentum of the federal project and its current availibility persuaded the school officials to take advantage of the opportunity while it was being offered.

Shortly thereafter, Robert Wall, head of the Special Project Division of the Orleans Parish schools, became the liaison between Washington, the theatre and the schools. Wall was respected as an efficient administrator and had had experience in theatre and theatrical promotion. Others involved in preparing the initial proposal were Edwin H. Friedrich, Director of Curriculum Services, Dr. M. F. Rosenberg, Head of the Division of Instruction, and, the Rt. Reverend Henry Bezou, representing the archdiocesan schools.

New Orleans had no professional theatre, and the first step in implementing the Project, once its funding seemed assured, was to find a director willing to organize a company. Stevens strongly recommended Stuart Vaughan to the New Orleans officials. Vaughan, a respected Broadway and off-Broadway director, had previously helped organize three other resident theatres--the New York Shakespeare Festival, New York's Phoenix Theatre and the Seattle Repertory Theatre. He had left Seattle in January because of a controversy with the theatre board of trustees and was at that point serving as artist-in-residence at Reed College. Stevens asked him to consider the possibility of organizing a company for one of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Projects. Vaughan later said he had been interested in New Orleans as a site and had suggested it to Stevens even before Mrs. Blum had begun her vigorous campaign.

In March, Stevens hired Vaughan as a temporary theatre consultant while waiting for a site to be chosen. In doing this he, more or less, had decided that one of the project sites should be a city that did not have an existing repertory company willing or able to take on the project. That decision, in turn, bolstered New Orleans' chances of being chosen, for many of the other cities under consideration already had professional resident theatres.

New Orleans had several other characteristics which made it an attractive possibility. It was a large Southern city with an interesting mixture of industrial and agricultural ties. The chief port on the Gulf of Mexico, it was a leading petroleum and financial center and also a major marketplace for the highly productive agricultural community surrounding it. The metropolitan area had a population of over one million, between 35 and 40 per cent of whom were Negro.

The Negro population was, as in most cities residentially segregated from the whites and the process of integration in the public schools had been relatively slow. In addition, many of the schools, both public and parochial, were segregated by sex, and an extraordinarily large proportion of the high school age youngsters attended private or parochial schools, leaving the public school population disproportionately black and "poor white." Clearly some of the existing barriers between groups of students might be penetrated (and in actuality were penetrated) by having students of different races, sexes, and economic backgrounds participate together in a common theatre-going experience.

Another attractive feature of New Orleans was its cosmopolitan mixture of old world and aristocratic Southern traditions. The Vieux Carre or French Quarter has the largest daily tourist traffic of any place in the country, and the city's most popular annual event is the world renowned Mardi Gras Carnival which climaxes a week of lavish balls and pageantry. Known as the birthplace of jazz, New Orleans also has a philharmonic orchestra and an opera company and is the home of six universities and a women's college.

Though there were still a number of unresolved details, the New Orleans school officials submitted their proposal for Title III funds, and it, in turn, was accepted by the Office of Education.

New Orleans: The First Year

June, 1966, was a time of beginning and a time of confusion for the New Orleans project. Though they had been approved for the grant, the schools, according to Dr. Dolce, weren't completely sure they would continue in the project since they were still uncertain about the community's ability to raise local funds for the rental of a theatre.

It was at this point that Vaughan arrived in New Orleans--having been sent by Stevens to begin groundwork for building a theatre company. In the rush of events communications had been clouded, and Vaughan's appointment and arrival came as a surprise to school officials. This state of affairs undoubtedly confirmed some of their fears that local administrators might not be permitted to exercise adequate control over the project.

Another element which contributed to the initial confusion was the matter of play selection. Junius Eddy from the Office of Education had called Dr. Friedrich to find out if the schools had any idea of what plays would be presented the first season. They did not, but immediately began to consider the matter with the aid of drama and English teachers. By the time Vaughan arrived, Dr. Friedrich had a list of preferred and recommended plays for the opening season. Naturally, Vaughan considered it his prerogative to choose a season, though, of course, his choices would be restricted by the prospect of having 40,000 high school students in his audience.

With all this as the background in June it is a great credit to all parties concerned that the project in New Orleans not only got under way on schedule, but in fact did so more smoothly and harmoniously than it did in the other two sites. Vaughan and Dolce and others met early in June and worked out their differences and apprehensions by establishing certain ground rules and areas of jurisdiction. On the subject of play secection Vaughan had final say, but the schools would also have some voice in the matter. An attempt would be made each year to present a balanced season of American, European, and classical (Shakespearean or Greek) offerings, and the two parties amicably agreed on the choices for the first season.

By far the biggest headache in June was the negotiations for the Civic Theatre. Maurice Grundy, vice president, and John Roberts, manager of the theatre, initially requested an $80,000 rental fee for 32 weeks--more than would be asked for a Broadway house under normal conditions. Eventually, by late May or early June, they came down to a price of $50 thousand, with the understanding that they would get all concession rights. Conflicts with the owners of the Civic Theatre were to plague the project for the next three years, give the theatre owners inordinate profits, and cast doubts upon the wisdom of locating such a project in a site where only a single suitable building was available.

About the only other house seriously considered for the Project was McMain Junior High School Auditorium, offered by Dolce at no cost when it became apparent that the community was not coming through with the contributions necessary to rent the Civic. Vaughan did not want McMain because it needed much renovation and he thought the public would not attend a professional theatre held in a public school building.

Finally, the Louisiana Council for Music and the Performing Arts raised about $15,000, added another $10,000 from the federal funds the LCMPA received in order to help further arts in the state, and the theatre company contributed $25,000 toward the rental from its operating expenses. Vaughan said he had called Stevens and had told him that, in order to get the project moving, he was willing to handle the $25,000 for theatre rental from his operating budget. It was done thereafter that way each season--the theatre rental was handled by the theatre with help from the LCMPA and the school systems, with very little from the community-at-large.

Vaughan requested and received from the Endowment the sum of $36,500.00

for the period of July 1 to August 1, 1966, in order to proceed with necessary promotional and organizational tasks. He hired as administrative director Hilmar Sallee, who left the New York Shakespeare Festival to work in New Orleans. They set up a new non-profit corporation to handle the funds with Vaughan, Sallee and a secretary of their lawyer as officers. In August Vaughan hired Walter "Paddy" Ryan as director of development. Ryan became general manager after Sallee left the project and returned to New York in December 1966.

Vaughan was also building his company of actors and technicians. He attracted several individuals from the Seattle Repertory Company, held auditions in New York, and contacted other actors whom he had known and worked with prior to Seattle. Among the people who joined him in New Orleans was David Scanlan who, six months earlier had been instrumental in bringing Vaughan to Reed College. Scanlan served the New Orleans company during the first year as stage manager and liaison to the schools. His wife, Barbara McMahon, became one of the company's key character actresses. Gordon Micunis, a young designer with impressive credentials, was hired to do costumes and sets for the new company. In all, the company was about 40 strong with 14 resident performers. Vaughan planned to "job-in" additional actors for specific shows.

In September, Superintendent Dolce appointed Miss Shirley Trusty, a secondary teacher in English and drama, as Project Supervisor for the schools. Miss Trusty and her staff were to be responsible each season for developing curriculum packets for each show, for organizing workshops and seminars; for scheduling and bussing; and for coordinating in-school visits by the actors and other theatre persons.

She immediately began holding meetings with teachers in preparation for the first play--Charley's Aunt by Brandon Thomas. She emphasized that the first play should simply be fun, a relaxing, enjoyable season opener--not to be studied. She cautioned the teachers not to "teach" the play, but rather to talk with students about the theatre and drama in general, and about the project and what it would mean to the 40,000 high school students in the New Orleans area. To all 485 English, speech, and drama teachers she distributed a portfolio of materials which reinforced these points and included a brief statement by Stuart Vaughan, a bulletin board broadside, and a copy of Charley's Aunt for the teacher. No copies were distributed for students.

After Charley's Aunt, the supervisor insisted that each student receive a personal paperback copy of each play. She felt that this was an important part of the entire program, and that the mere possession of a book meant a great deal to many students. (In the other two Projects, books were distributed to the schools by request, at a rate of one copy to every three or four students.) Subsequent curriculum portfolios were also considerably augmented with study guides, motivational devices, historical information, biographical notes, bibliographies, and related articles and essays.

Scheduling and logistical procedures for the New Orleans project were set up by Mr. John Nicknovich. Each school received a notice a month in advance of attending a performance, which gave the date, time, number of busses assigned to the school, and number of pupils per bus. About 1,200 students were scheduled for each performance of each play, five days a week, for about 29 performances, with 50 students and a teacher assigned to each bus. Scheduling of rival schools at the same performance was avoided, but some racially integrated audiences were planned.

During October rehearsals were under way and the company pursued its campaign to attract season subscribers. Vaughan and Sallee met with community groups at coffees and also toured to schools to address speech and drama classes and generally to inform students about the Project. In retrospect, it might be said that the theatre should have devoted more of its energies in those first months toward building an adult audience, but its school commitment deterred it in some degree as perhaps did Vaughan's desire not to get too involved with influential local personalities. His experience in Seattle had taught him that people who profess to be interested in building a theatre are sometimes also interested in controlling theatre policy. Seeking autonomy, Vaughan had specifically avoided creating a board of directors and instead formed a 16 member "Advisory Council" headed by State Senator Michael H. O'Keefe and Mrs. Blum, but containing few people of consequence enough to rally the community's resources behind the theatre. The total number of adult subscriptions for the first season came to 5,207 (whereas in Seattle Vaughan's first season had a subscription audience of just under nine thousand).

The idea to begin the Project with Charley's Aunt was primarily Vaughan's, and it turned out to be an extremely good one. On November 16, 1969, the play opened with a noon performance to a packed house of students from John F. Kennedy High School. For most of the youngsters it was the first live theatre performance they had ever attended. The production was enthusiastically cheered by the students and praised by the critics. Critic Howard Taubman told his New York Times readers that New Orleans was offering its students "Education with a fillip" and he went on to say:

> Stuart Vaughan...has staged the old farce with the unfiltered gusto it deserves. But his direction does not seek to milk laughs. It is merely playing fair with "Charley's Aunt."

Taubman also approved of the idea of opening the curtains at intermission time and showing students how scene changes were made. "This is a clever idea which heightens, rather than dilutes the total experience," he said.

However, the idea did not at all appeal to the owners of the Civic

Theatre. They expected a neat profit from the sale of sodas and popcorn at intermission time and were upset when school officials told students they could not leave their seats to purchase refreshments. The restriction was a practical one from the point of view of the educators; 1500 students crammed into the tiny concession area would have been utter chaos. However, because of this loss of revenue the Civic management jacked the theatre rental fee up to $75,000 for the second and third seasons.

The second play of the season was Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet which opened on January 5, 1967 to glowing reviews. One of the extra dividends of this production was the appearance of British music hall actress Tessie O'Shea, who was jobbed in to play the role of Juliet's nurse. The students apparently enjoyed the production though it did not have the immediate universal appeal that Charley's Aunt had enjoyed.

One minor incident marred what had otherwise been an amazingly smooth opening season, when a performance of Romeo and Juliet was stopped during the second act due to the rowdiness of a few in an audience of 1,100 high school boys. The incident was atypical but illustrates that the actors were playing before audiences which often varied in radical ways and sometimes created entirely novel situations.

During this time there was excellent cooperation between the theatre and the schools. David Scanlan not only contributed generously to the writing of curriculum materials, but he often went into schools to speak about the Project. So did Stuart Vaughan and a number of the actors. In total, 21 in-school lectures and demonstrations were given during the year; nine speech workshops (attended by over 9,000 students) were held at the Civic Theatre; and several press conferences were arranged so that student newspaper editors, reporters, and photographers could interview the director and his company. In the spring Gordon Micunis led three art workshops on set and costume designing; about 3,000 students attended and as a follow-up artists from 13 different schools had their designs exhibited in the theatre's foyer.

Attendance at adult performances was seldom disastrous but sometimes disappointing. This, in spite of the fact that press support for the company and Educational Laboratory Theatre Project was almost always positive. It is possible that the publicity about the Project was so good that many adults stayed away from the theatre fearing that all it offered was "educational" literature with live illustrations.

The third offering of the season was Thornton Wilder's Our Town. It opened in late February and featured several veteran actors and actresses who had been "jobbed in" for the play. The local critics again praised the production and both students and adults concurred in their responses.

The final production was similarly heralded and praised by the press. It was Sheridan's Restoration comedy The Rivals, starring June Havoc as

Mrs. Maloprop. Miss Havoc had worked for Vaughan at the Phoenix Theatre in New York and she was warmly welcomed by New Orleans audiences.

Attendance during the last two productions steadily grew and there was apparent good harmony between the schools and the theatre who jointly announced the play choices for the second season. Outside observers marvelled at the smoothness with which the Project was operating. On top of this the press had been enthusiastic throughout the year and was highly supportive at the opening of the campaign for new subscriptions. Clearly there was good reason for optimism as the premiere season closed.

The First Year: CEMREL

CEMREL did not formally become involved with the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project until after the theatre seasons had begun both in Rhode Island and in New Orleans. Though the Executive Director of CEMREL, Dr. Wade Robinson, had been asked to formulate research plans sometime in July of 1966, it was late fall before the Office of Education gave its approval to those plans and the research component of the Project was officially funded on December 1st. A fuller history of CEMREL's activities in the area of research is recorded in the second volume of this report and need not be repeated here in any great detail. During the first months CEMREL was primarily engaged in defining problems and gathering baseline data. One striking piece of information that came to light in responses to its initial questionnaires was the fact that a majority of the English teachers in Rhode Island and New Orleans had almost no experience with theatre or the teaching of drama. About 70% of those polled expressed a desire for an in-service or summer course in drama. Because the English classroom would be one of the key areas where researchers could conduct experimental studies, CEMREL made arrangements in the spring of 1967 for a two week summer workshop involving ten English teachers from each of the Project sites. It was planned that the teachers would share their first year's experiences and discuss the problems they encountered with a staff of professional actors, drama teachers, and project administrators. The workshop would be followed by a month in which the staff members would prepare experimental packages of curriculum materials designed to meet the needs identified during the workshop. These curriculum materials would have immediate practical value in the classroom and would also play an important part in a large scale experimental study of the relationships between classroom study of drama and attendance at the theatre.

In late May it was announced that Los Angeles would become the third Project site and ten teachers from that city were included in the workshop which began early in July in Providence, Rhode Island.
It was a productive two weeks, not only in terms of identifying curricular needs, but also in terms of communication. The workshop provided

participants at all three sites an opportunity to exchange ideas and learn something more about the national scope of the Project. They also learned a little more clearly what CEMREL's role was in the program and how they individually might be asked to participate in the research activities related to the Project.

As planned, the curriculum materials were produced that summer and in the fall they were extensively field tested and revised. Other spring and summer activities at CEMREL involved the tabulation of data collected, the development of a clipping file for each project site, the establishment of a local office at each city, a review of existing theatre research, the development of new research techniques, and the refinement of projected work plans. Compared to the hustle and rush of activities in Rhode Island and New Orleans, CEMREL's entrance into the Project was decidedly undramatic but it had begun to play its role along with the more featured participants.

Enter, Los Angeles

Why would anyone seriously consider using large sums of federal money to subsidize a professional theatre in Los Angeles? Isn't that the home of Hollywood? And a major center for the television industry? Do the professional actors there need another outlet for their talents? Since the city already has many community and university theatres, do the people of Los Angeles really lack opportunities to see live professional or semi-professional productions? Certainly these and similar questions were raised by officials in Washington when Los Angeles was initially suggested as a possible location for the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. And they are still raised by both supporters and critics of the Laboratory Theatre concept when they first learn that Los Angeles, in fact, became the third site for the Project.

The reasons for Los Angeles being chosen are almost as complex as the sprawling city itself. And to understand those reasons one must know a little more about Los Angeles, about its past as well as the present.

One feature of Los Angeles that makes it a fascinating city, a challenging one, and a representative one is its location on the West Coast. The West was 19th century America's last frontier and it attracted millions of people from all over the continent. Whereas Boston, New York, and Philadelphia served as a melting pot for immigrants coming to America, the West, and Los Angeles in particular, became a gathering point for native Americans emigrating from every region of the country.

Because of its location the city also has a rich mix of ethnic cultures.

Los Angeles has, besides more than half a million Negro citizens (confined, as in most large urban centers, to the "inner city") a very large Mexican-American[2] (or Chicano) community and a sizeable minority of citizens with Japanese, Chinese, and other Asian ancestry. As is the case in other metropolitan areas members of each minority group tend to cluster in particular residential sections some of which are affluent but most of which are ghettos in the pejorative sense that the term is used today.

This large representation of distinct ethnic sub-cultures in the city and a realization that there was little opportunity for them to explore or express their cultural heritage motivated two UCLA faculty members, Dr. J. Alfred Cannon, a psychiatrist and neurosurgeon and C. Bernard (Jack) Jackson, a composer, to begin campaigning for the establishment of some sort of cultural center for minority groups in Los Angeles. Cannon and Jackson consulted with others on the UCLA faculty and with community leaders about the feasibility of such a center. Though they held several meetings and stirred up some interest, not much was accomplished until after the summer of 1965.

That was the summer of the riots in Watts. The terrible destruction and tragic loss of life resulting from those riots dramatically underscored the need, not only in Los Angeles but throughout the country, for greater concern about the plight of minority groups. And knowledgeable people recognized that the plight of the ghetto involved cultural as well as economic deficiencies. So Cannon and Jackson soon gained a more attentive audience in Los Angeles and the city itself became a focal point for national concern about racial and ethnic problems in our cities.

Undoubtedly, concern over the Watts riots made officials in the Office of Education receptive to the arguments of politically powerful advocates of Los Angeles as a site for the ELT Project. There were other considerations as well.[3] Looking back at the matter a year later (after Los Angeles had been officially chosen as the third Project site) Miss Kathryn Bloom wrote

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[2] Spanish was the "native" language of Los Angeles long before English since California originally was part of the Republic of Mexico. In terms of its theatre history, Los Angeles had no English speaking productions until the spring of 1848 when several soldier-actors performed a minstrel-variety show before some of their American compatriots. The first professional dramatic performances in English came even later.

> ...in many ways Los Angeles is one of the most desirable sites for this project since it not only meets the requirements originally laid out for the project, but offers an opportunity to include the Watts area and to explore the role of the arts in educating the deprived. Together with Providence and New Orleans, an excellent geographic distribution would exist.

In October of 1965 Charles Mark and Jack Morrison visited Los Angeles and discussed the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project with the Superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District, Jack P. Crowther. Dr. Crowther was interested in the Project, but there were many unknowns that had to be explored before the school system could commit itself to such a program. At that time literally dozens of proposals for possible Title III programs had been submitted to the Unified District for consideration. Several of them concerned the teaching of drama. It would obviously have been unfair for the schools to arbitrarily decide that any one proposal would have priority over the others. Therefore, the District had asked for a Title III planning grant which would provide funds and time to study all the proposals and to develop the most promising ones in detail; it was a necessary step for a system as large and complex as the one in Los Angeles. However, the Unified District was not awarded the planning grant until the spring of 1966, and even if they had known at that time that they definitely wanted to submit a proposal for the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, there was insufficient time to do so by May 25th, the cutoff date if the Project was to be funded for the 1966-67 school year.

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[3] The city covers an area of over 455 square miles surrounded by a network of politically independent townships hooked together by a massive freeway system. It is surpassed as an industrial center only by New York and Chicago and its 41 miles of frontage on man-made San Pedro Bay give its harbor great advantages as an important world trade center.

Los Angeles County is over 4,000 square miles in area and has a population of close to 7 million. It is the home of five major universities, seven state and private colleges, about seven junior colleges. The citizens of Los Angeles County have an educational level which is substantially above other parts of the nation. In general, and as it would be expected, the minority groups have had less formal education than the dominant Anglo group and consequently have lower incomes and higher rates of unemployment. However, Los Angeles' non-white population is somewhat better off than its urban counterparts throughout the country in education, employment and income.

Some of the school districts in the county were consolidated with the city school system to form the Los Angeles Unified School District--an immense amalgam covering some 710 square miles and taking in some 802,000 students.

Los Angeles would offer new challenges to the Project and would provide interesting contrasts to the smaller cities being considered as Project sites.

Dr. Aram Tolegian was named administrative coordinator of Title III programs; and those working on the Educational Laboratory Theatre Proposal moved toward a proposal submission date of January 15, 1967. On November 10, 1966, Dr. Tolegian reported that, based on decisions of committees studying the various suggestions for Title III monies, his office would proceed with plans to present the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project to the Board of Education for action in time for the January deadline.

Another of the unknowns that faced Dr. Crowther was the matter of what theatre company would be available to serve the Project's needs. Although university and community theatres utilized the talents of professional actors, Los Angeles had, at that time, no independent professional repertory company. However, the Music Center of Los Angeles County was under construction, and had they wished, the Mark Taper Forum would have been able to develop a program related the the Laboratory Theatre Project goals. But officials at the Music Center were not interested. They wanted to build their own program unencumbered by school commitments.

Another organization that was considered and that did express interest in the Project was the Theatre Group, a very promising company that was associated with UCLA. However, when its managing director was subsequently appointed Artistic Director of the Mark Taper Forum, the Theatre Group's interest in the federal program waned. So in early 1966 both the feasibility of the School District's participation and the availability of a theatre company were very much in question.

Meanwhile, Cannon and Jackson had found additional support for their idea of a cultural center for minority groups. They and their colleagues had gone out to the community and successfully solicited both money and free professional advice. They created a board of trustees and in April of 1966 incorporated an organization known as The Inner City Cultural Center or ICCC.

The ICCC charter described as the organization's primary aim:

> the establishment of a center for the performing and graphic arts, the first major center in the United States to be located in the heart of a minority community and dedicated to the presentation of artists and works of special interest to the residents of this community.

One of the components of the Center was to be a repertory theatre company featuring inter-racial casting. Such a company would serve the dual function of providing minority group actors a wide variety of possible roles often denied them because of their racial or ethnic backgrounds and of providing minority group audiences with productions which would relate closely to their lives and the world as they perceived it.

Though there was no direct relationship between the formation of the ICCC and the Los Angeles school system's interest in the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project,[4] the simultaneous development of each fortuitously led to negotiations which solved previously unresolved problems for both parties.

It seemed to Cannon, Jackson and others that a permanent location for the ICCC was of prime importance if their efforts toward cohesion for the minority community were to succeed; and Jackson said they were emphatic in their belief that nothing of lasting value could be accomplished without such a permanent, physical center.

They were still looking for funds and a home in September, 1966, when Mr. Gregory Peck became a board member of the Inner City Cultural Center. His joining the ICCC Board had no immediate connection with his work on the National Council on the Arts or the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project.

Peck later explained he was an active member of the ICCC Board and the National Council on the Arts but didn't put the two of them together for some time, "...until we, on the Arts Council, began talking to the effect that we ought to get moving on selecting the third site for the Lab Theatre Project."

There were some inherent contradictions in the idea of combining the Inner City group with those of the Laboratory Theatre Project. Jack Jackson, looking back on his initial motives, said he had wanted the ICCC company to "bring good exciting, relevant theatre to the community--works that have meaning and relevance to the Los Angeles people--to do them in a way truly representative of the people of Los Angeles--all the different cultures and races involved--to be relevant to Los Angeles as a city. That had never before been a criteria of theatre in Los Angeles." Gregory Peck recognized that, as part of the Project, the Inner City Repertory Company would have to serve the whole community, not just the minority community, and that they would have to select classic plays or plays of merit which would be appropriate for high school students. The contradictions were not insurmountable, however, and Peck advised the Inner City board that by performing a service for the entire community, the theatre company could also serve some of the Inner City Center's goals. After much discussion, the ICCC board voted to make application for sponsorship of the Laboratory Theatre Project.

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[4] Jackson and Cannon had not, at the time, even heard of the ELT Project.

By this time, after considering several buildings, Cannon and Jackson had settled on the Boulevard Theatre at 1615 West Washington Boulevard as the best location for the Center's permanent home. They chose the site because it was in a minority neighborhood and accessible to major thoroughfares.

On October 19, 1966, Dr. Cannon wrote to Dr. Crowther advising him of the ICCC Board's decision to offer its theatre for the ELT Project. The letter stated that the offer "includes the use of the 900-seat theatre as well as renovations, [and] such production as is necessary as well as the many volunteers who would help implement the purposes of this program. Our financial commitment would proximate between $40,000 and $50,000 by way of renovations and promotion." He enclosed a copy of a letter dated October 14, 1966, from Thriftimart, Inc. owners of the Boulevard Theatre, stating that it would make the theatre available to the Inner City Cultural Center for a minimum of three years, pending execution of a formal lease.

These committments aided Dr. Tolegian, his staff, and the various advisory committees in their development of plans for the Title III application.

Their proposal called for:

> ...in-depth experiences of live dramatic productions for 34,000 B10 students (first semester, 10th graders) 1,120 teachers and a minimum of 21,600 adults...by presenting... on the highest professional level, four selected plays to the same students and teachers...one Greek play, one Shakespearean play, one 18th Century play and one contemporary play.

Because of the district's immenseness, it was decided to make the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project in Los Angeles available to one-half of the 10th graders the first season, 11th graders the second season and 12th graders the third.

One of the most important occurrences during this period was an impassioned and influential speech by Peck on December 22, 1966, detailing the Project to the Los Angeles Board of Education. Dr. Tolegian called it "electric" and said it greatly strengthened his hand in getting the School Board's approval of the Project.

The January 15, 1967 deadline for the proposal was met, and several months later Los Angeles was selected as the third Educational Laboratory Theatre Project site. The schools and the Inner City Repertory Company had until the following September to further organize their operating plans and work out specific details to their mutual satisfaction.

Los Angeles: The First Year

Negotiations between the ICCC and the school board continued through the winter and spring in anticipation of the grant. Of prime concern was the renovation of the theatre. The ICCC Board had agreed to take on that responsibility, and had been given estimates that the job would cost $40,000 to $50,000. It ended up costing more than $210,000. (Still, the theatre was never carpeted.) Robert Kennard, of the architectural firm of Kennard and Silvers, Edward Hearne of the UCLA Theatre Arts faculty, and William Pereira, known for his experience in planning theatre facilities, donated their services to ICCC and directed the renovation operations.

Both the schools and the ICCC began searching for people to direct and administer their respective branches of the operation. The school system, being an established institution, could look within its ranks for appropriate personnel and, in fact, had a standard operating procedure for interested teachers to submit their credentials for consideration. The ICCC, on the other hand, was looking for an entire staff, and had no precedents to guide its search for personnel.

In March, 1967, Gregory Peck, still an active and influential member fo the ICCC Board of Trustees, learned that the Theatre of the Living Arts in Philadelphia had fired its young, controversial director, Andre Gregory. Peck had seen some of Gregory's work in Philadelphia and had been very much impressed. He immediately called Gregory to ask if he would be interested in becoming Artistic Director of the Inner City Repertory Company. At first Gregory was not too anxious to get involved with another regional theatre, but he visited Los Angeles, talked with members of the ICCC Board, and found himself sympathetic to their goals. They, in turn, liked Gregory, and he was hired as Artistic Director.

Gregory asked David Lunney, who had been Managing Director of the Theatre of the Living Arts, to serve in the same capacity at the ICRC.

Gregory also hired several actors who had worked with him in Philadelphia and a few more whom he had known prior to that time. He and Lunney recruited additional actors for the Company both in New York and Los Angeles.

In the meantime, Jack Jackson was appointed Executive Director of the entire Inner City Cultural Center. Jackson had shared the Board's view that Gregory was an excellent choice for Artistic Director, but he was upset that Gregory had filled major positions without consulting the Board. He felt that more people from the Los Angeles area and specifically more people from the minority communities should have been hired. Not to do so was to ignore the basic reasons for the founding of the ICCC in the first place.

Only two of the key people in ICRC were non-white. One was Jackson himself (who, though officially Andre Gregory's superior, was hired at 1/3 of Gregory's salary), and the other was Miss Vinnette Carroll, a highly regarded director and an award winning actress. As a director she had distinguished herself with the Academy of Performing Arts, the Equity Library Theatre, in off-Broadway productions, and in television. She was scheduled to direct several of the Inner City productions during the premiere season.

In June, Jackson, still concerned about ICRC's hiring practices, submitted a list of guidelines for employment to the Board of Trustees. He did not move that they formally adopt these guidelines but did make it clear that as Executive Director he would try to follow them.

The Los Angeles schools had chosen ten teachers to participate in CEMREL's summer curriculum workshop. Unlike the teachers from the other two sites, who had been chosen specifically because they were new to theatre, the Los Angeles teachers were experienced and sophisticated in drama, and were, in fact, intended to take the lead in training other teachers. By early July they had already begun to formulate some opinions about the forthcoming ELT Project, and while most of them arrived in Providence in a mood of hopeful expectation, several already were expressing reservations about the recently announced play choices for the initial season. Andre Gregory had met with a play selection committee consisting of teachers and high school officials and had decided to begin the season with Richard Wilbur's translation of Moliere's Tartuffe. The other choices were Chekhov's The Sea Gull, Brecht's Caucasian Chalk Circle and Shakespeare's Richard III. The doubtful teachers felt that none of the selections would have the immediate appeal needed to attract the full attention and support of uninitiated tenth graders.

These misgivings on the part of some workshop participants were indicative of a generally cautious (if not suspicious) attitude on the part of the school community at large. There were at least three factors underlying this caution. First, because the school system was so large, very little information concerning the Project filtered down to the classroom teacher during the months preceding its implementation. Consequently, teachers felt that they were inadequately represented in the matter of play selection and they were generally wary of an unknown quantity. Related to the lack of communication was the prevalent feeling in California (one which still exists there and elsewhere in the nation) that a federal project always has strings attached to it that are undesirable and inhibit rather than enhance a community. And, finally, some of the teachers resented the Project because they themselves had submitted Title III proposals which had not been funded.

The Los Angeles teachers in Rhode Island were joined by Mr. William Gass who had just been appointed Theatre Consultant and Curriculum Specialist for the schools. His main responsibility would be to provide teachers with curriculum materials for use prior to and following the theatre-going experience. His superior, Dr. Hans Georg Stern, was appointed Project Coordinator several weeks later. He was to act as liaison between the schools and the theatre, to plan and implement the bussing logistics, to arrange in-school visits for theatre personnel, and to report on the problems and the progress of the Project in its daily operations.

In late July and August, two 30-hour workshops were held for English teachers in Los Angeles. These workshops were supported by regular school district funds in anticipation of the theatre project and were led by Mrs. Nancy Delaney, Chairman of the English department at Chatsworth High School.

Federal funds were not officially allocated until mid-September, but the theatre company received an advance from the National Endowment and worked with credit obtained on the understanding that the Office of Education money was forthcoming. A season subscription campaign was inaugurated in the summer and there were at least two fund raising affairs for the ICCC. It became obvious that the renovations on the Boulevard Theatre would not be completed in time and the first production was rescheduled to play at the Lindy Opera House. (This change added a $22,000 rental fee to the cost of theatre renovations.)

Gregory commenced his rehearsals for Tartuffe without communicating to the schools the rather liberal interpretation he planned to give the text in his production. Instead of 17th Century France, he set the play in Spanish California in 1842. He did this because he wished to provide a scene with which the students could identify, but which still was typified by a social system--Catholic, patriarchal, and tyrannical--similar to that of Moliere's France. In the role of Tartuffe, a man who uses the priesthood for all the wrong reasons, he cast the distinguished Negro actor Louis Gossett. He felt that students seeing a black man in the role would instantly realize that he was an outsider, an underdog, and would understand that the basic conflict in the play was not between good and evil, but between two more or less stupid aspects of the same culture.

Whatever his intentions, the immediate effect of Andre's production was catastrophic, and the Project came close to being discontinued before it was officially inaugurated. School officials were invited to a preview of Tartuffe on Thursday, September 14th, and the administrators and teachers who attended were generally shocked and outraged by the performance they saw. Some complained that the production reinforced every negative stereotype of both Negroes and Mexicans while others objected to specific stage business which was ribald, lusty, and climaxed by a black Tartuffe trying to seduce a not-unwilling white woman. And, of course, others objected to Moliere's attack on religious hypocrisy. Almost all of the previewers felt that the show was unfit for 10th graders and the first few student performances which were scheduled to begin on Monday were cancelled.

Emergency meetings were held between theatre, ICCC directors, and school officials. As a result, Gregory agreed to tone down some of the business on stage (namely the seduction scene and an on-stage bath), and selected school audiences attended performances the next Friday through Tuesday with the regular school schedule being resumed September 27. Nonetheless. despite the changes made by the Repertory Company, parochial schools dropped out entirely while Tartuffe played.

Looking back on that first production, Gregory Peck called Tartuffe an "unmitigated disaster and a terrible blow to the hopes of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project." Jack Jackson, felt even more strongly about it:

> If I were going to mock this whole concept of a cultural center in a minority area, I would have done Tartuffe the way it was done. It was a cheap production--done in poor taste--cheap in every way.

Dr. Stern felt that Tartuffe was:

> ...bad but not that bad. It was like a gathering of all the forces who did not want the Project. Everyone knows the time to stop something is in the beginning before it really takes root.

The artistic director had wanted the kids to identify and he felt his production reached them. (Students' comments suggest Gregory was right.) At any rate, he was told either to change his ways or leave the Project, and he left about a month later.

Before Gregory left, however, he played a role in two other matters which affected the company's first season. The Caucasian Chalk Circle, the second scheduled play, was in rehearsal under the direction of Vinnette Carroll, but Gregory was unhappy with its early progress and Miss Carroll was apparently uncomfortable with the text itself. So it was decided to have Miss Carroll instead direct a production of

The Flies for the adult audiences. Then, at the schools' insistence, Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie replaced Chalk Circle as the second Project play. (See Georg Stern's explanation of this change and its consequences, in Volume Three of this report.) School officials had initially been wary of the Communist associations of Bertold Brecht, and they had been concerned about the generally gloomy nature of the remaining three plays. Their experience with Tartuffe had made them additionally cautious not only about play choices but about the interpretation given to them. (They used this opportunity to recommend a change in the Shakespearean selection as well.)

Gregory planned to direct The Glass Menagerie himself and he cast a Negro, Paul Winfield, in the role of the Gentleman Caller. When he left in October, it was decided to job-in artistic directors for the remainder of the season. The play's new director, Lonny Chapman, viewed the play more conventionally than Gregory and would not have chosen Winfield for the role, but he also did not wish to dismiss him. The dilemma was solved by having Winfield play the Gentleman Caller in white-face. The production opened on November 9 and was well received by the schools and the press. From this point on there were approximately 46 Los Angeles City high schools and 18 private and parochial schools participating in the Project.

By this time also, both Stern and Gass had established fairly effective procedures for providing educational services to the participating schools and teachers. Teaching guides, a copy of the play, and a number of play-related materials were packaged and distributed to all B10 English teachers and other resources like films and recordings were made available for their use. Paperback copies of each play were also available at the ratio of one copy for every three or four students.

All participating teachers in the Project were invited to special performances of the four productions in advance of student attendance. At about the same time the Project Coordinator scheduled special meetings or seminars at which there was an opportunity to discuss the Project with officials involved in it as well as with guest directors and other authorities from the field of drama.

Following the daily performance for each school audience, the actors returned to the stage to participate in a brief question and answer period conducted by the director. This session generally proved to be valuable because it gave students a chance to see the actors as people rather than characters, and the actors' informality and frankness did much to make the theatre experience more important for the students.

High schools participating in the Project were encouraged to request actor visitations to their schools, and students were encouraged to request assistance from the company for their dramatic activities. The 22 actors who participated in these in-school services reached approximately 2,600 10th grade students. In addition there were four student press conferences held at the theatre and students from approximately 25 schools sent representatives to these meetings.

As in the other two sites, it soon became apparent that morning performances worked better for the schools than did afternoon ones. At first there was not enough supervision in getting the students in and out of the theatre, but, gradually, as the house staff and teachers became more cooperative and experienced, the operation became smoother. Each group of 50 students was accompanied by at least one and usually two teachers who stayed with them throughout the theatre visit. Students originally were not allowed to eat at the theatre, and some restlessness was attributed to hunger. School officials also pointed out that corrections in heating, ventilation and acoustics at the theatre as well as installation of carpeting would vastly improve the experiences. Other comments regarding restlessness had to do with the dullness and length of some scenes and the large number of understudies who were used in later productions and who normally were not as professional as the regular cast.

Two procedural complications which were not operative at the other Project sites somewhat impeded school operations in Los Angeles. One was the necessity of hiring substitutes for teachers who accompanied students to the theatre. Since only 10B students attended the plays, the teachers frequently had other classes which had to be covered. This was not only a nuisance, it was expensive, and approximately $23,000 had to be budgeted to pay for substitute teachers each year. The other complication was a requirement that each public school student had to bring a signed parental permission slip to class prior to attending each play; if he didn't bring one, he wasn't allowed to go to the theatre.

At approximately the same time that The Glass Menagerie opened for the student audiences, Vinnette Carroll's production of The Flies by Jean-Paul Sartre opened for evening audiences, and was well-received by the press. The Williams and Sartre plays were offered to the adult audiences on an alternating schedule. Later in the season Miss Carroll directed another non-Project production of William Hanley's Slow Dance on the Killing Ground. A contemporary drama, interracial in cast and theme, "Slow Dance" was so successful that it had a return engagement after the regular season ended.

Alfred Ryder was hired to direct the third Project play, Chekhov's The Sea Gull. It was a well-mounted production and according to many officials, the best of that season. However, according to several reports by teachers and other observers, it was not very popular with the students. On the other hand an updated version of A Midsummer Night's Dream, the final Project offering directed by Malcolm Black, seemed to relate to students and was received with enthusiasm.

Throughout the first season, the Los Angeles Project showed a slight increase in average attendance. Beginning with Tartuffe, at which the overall attendance was 70 percent of the planned-for student attendance of 34,000, the average went up to 79 percent for the last production. The controversy over Tartuffe clouds the picture somewhat, but it is apparent that student attendance was never particularly high. Factors which kept some students from attending included difficulties in getting busses, after school jobs held by many students, unsigned parental permission slips, heavy rains which caused street flooding, and student boycotts of schools.

The Inner City Repertory Company was beset by several staggering financial problems during its first season. Debts were run up which were to ruin ICRC's credit, embroil it in endless difficulties, and demand a disproportionate share of everyone's energies for the next two years. To start with there was the unexpectedly high cost for the renovation of the Boulevard Theatre. Management compounded things by putting very few restrictions on the technical and production staffs. Consequently, production costs were much greater than the company could reasonably afford. Lunney was criticized by the ICCC Board and resigned in April 1968.

The Internal Revenue Service became a continuing threat to the ICRC, coming close on several occasions to shutting down the entire operation because of past-due taxes. This threat hung over the company throughout the second season even though steady payments on the tax debts were made after Jackson took charge.

Another financial headache developed after Alfred Ryder refused to use some members of the company who had been under contract with Gregory and Lunney to act in The Sea Gull. They and other actors went out on breach, i.e., refused to work for the balance of the season. So Ryder "jobbed-in" additional actors and the ICCC in effect, had to pay salaries for double casts from January to mid-April.

To add fuel to the fire of financial woes, Congressman G. P. Libscomb called for an investigation into the way federal funds were being used by the ICCC and the General Accounting Office moved in to investigate during December and January. Junius Eddy, Project Officer, Office of Education in Washington, felt the GAO should not have been called in so early; that it was a shakedown period and the Office of Education itself soon would have discovered the problems in the ICRC's bookkeeping.

So the first year in Los Angeles concluded with the ICRC in a very uncertain position both financially and artistically. Although Gass and Peck expressed concern about the uneven performances during the season, Dr. Stern felt otherwise:

> We have this foolish tendency to want instant success...

> things don't go that way. We'll know the maximum benefit of this project when it has a chance to mature and grow...I believe there is a reason for doing it with the Inner City and it is the right reason. Maybe the theatre, by its example, rather than just by talking, can move other theatre organizations in the right direction...I see the Los Angeles Laboratory Theatre Project as having a much broader social impact. The students see more than a play--it's an object lesson. People of all races still _can_ work together. Theatre sort of represents the last bridge--an overriding consideration in an age when various groups push for integration. The Board of Education needs to realize we are in a high risk business. We're not renting a film or buying a book. A play doesn't exist until you see it on a stage, preferably with a full audience.

Dr. Stern also felt such projects should be funded for the full three years at the beginning so that plans could be made without constant worrying about that angle. He added:

> This Project has shown that which we already knew, namely that it is very difficult to impose a Project of this kind on an ongoing institution, such as the school system. It's like two gears rapidly spinning--you want them to mesh and not clash. We want to be thought of as a _part_ of the curriculum, not separate from it.

Members of the National Advisory Board for the Project agreed that major problems encountered during the first season had to do with the need to replace a constantly changing troupe with a steady nucleus of professional actors and the development of a much better relationship between the ICCC and the school system. They felt that the Los Angeles School System had exerted too much control over the Project after the _Tartuffe_ episode, but saw hopeful indications that the second season would run more smoothly and harmoniously.

Rhode Island: The Second Year

Like their Los Angeles counterparts, many Rhode Island teachers at the 1967 CEMREL summer workshops had expressed dissatisfaction about the choice of plays presented the previous season and about the apparent autonomy of the director in selecting plays. Several were upset that Bernard Masterson had been transferred to another position, and in general the enthusiasm for the program was tempered with misgivings about where it was headed.

A new Project Coordinator, Miss Rose Vallely, was appointed late in the spring by the Providence school system and she joined the staff at the summer workshop. Miss Vallely immediately undertook to learn from the educators what their major complaints were and to establish more amicable relations with Trinity Square. Miss Vallely concentrated initially in selling the Project to the Principals and the English department chairman. Her efforts to open up communications succeeded so well that by the end of the second year hardly anyone--either in the schools or at the theatre--seemed dissatisfied. And this was in spite of the fact that Adrian Hall still reserved the exclusive right to select the plays for Project Discovery.

Much of the credit for the growing harmony and the lack of dissension during the second season must also be given to Hall himself. He gave the schools exciting and stimulating theatre, directing productions which appealed equally to students and teachers. It was hard to find fault with arrangements that produced so fine a product.

Hall had wanted to begin the Project season with a production of Brecht's Three-Penny Opera, but this choice was considered unsuitable by Catholic school officials. Public school officials offered to back Hall's choice, but rather than make an issue of it, Hall offered Julius Caesar to the students and used the small theatre to do Three-Penny Opera for his subscription audience. The Brecht play received a predominantly negative review from the Boston Hearld Traveler and glowing ones from Providence critics. It is noteable that both Bradford Swan of the Providence Journal and Lois Atwood of the East Providence Post commented on the directorial blending of set and content, for with this production Hall and set designer Eugene Lee had begun experimenting with new effects and techniques which were to become the trademark of Hall's productions.

The first Project Discovery play of the second season was Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Directed by Hall, it opened for students on November 6th and was first presented to adult audiences about a week later. Its reception is well summarized by Bradford Swan's review in the Providence Journal .

The review was removed for ERIC reproduction owing to copyright restrictions.

Meanwhile, Miss Vallely had asked each principal to appoint a single representative, usually an English or drama teacher, to act as liaison with Project Discovery officials. This led to a greater and more effective use of the educational services provided during the year. Miss Vallely and Richard Cumming continued to assemble and distribute curriculum packets to all participating teachers and they also made paperback copies of the plays available, as well as films, filmstrips, recordings, and tapes. Other services provided during the first year were continued and, in some cases, extended.

The second Project play of the season was The Importance of Being Earnist and a seminar for teachers and administrators was conducted in advance of the production by Mr. Henry Butler, actor in and guest director of the show. The discussion concerned Mr. Butler's views on the author, the play, and his production. Members of the Trinity Square Repertory Company joined him in discussing the Wilde comedy.

Butler's production of Earnest received good critical reviews in the press and an enthusiastic response from the students. During the run Butler and the English actress Joan White visited 32 schools with a short program entitled "A Funny Thing Happened." The two introduced, explained, and illustrated styles of comic acting using scenes from masterpieces ranging from Shakespeare through 20th century playwrights. The program was a resounding hit with both students and teachers.

Running concurrently with The Importance of Being Earnest, in the small theatre, was a new historical drama about Oscar Wilde, Years of the Locust by Norman Holland. The production, directed by Hall, was widely acclaimed and won the Trinity Square Repertory Company an invitation to the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. The company sought to interest mature high school students who had enjoyed Wilde's Earnest to attend this serious play by offering them special discount rates of 50¢ per ticket. The rates were also available to accompanying teachers.

A desire to experiment with the idea of bringing theatre to the schools instead of the schools to the theatre, coupled with the necessity of relinquishing the Rhode Island School of Design theatre to the RISD drama classes for a period of eight weeks, led to a development called Rhode Show. Rhode Show was a touring program of one-acts and excerpts which was designed to supplement the theatre experience and allow smaller groups of students to see and communicate with actors in more intimate surroundings. Because of scheduling and monetary difficulties it took the place of a fourth Project Discovery production in the theatre.

The Rhode Show traveled during February and March of 1968 and its material consisted of Chekhov's "The Marriage Proposal," Pirandello's "The Man With the Flower in His Mouth," a section from Master's Spoon River Anthology and the Lucy Song from Three-Penny Opera. It was set up with selections varying in length from 5 to 35 minutes so the program could be tailored to fit each school's needs. A total of 49 performances were given to audiences which widely varied in size. Dialogues between actors and students following each performance helped the actors to see just how well they were reaching the students and the students to understand the disciplines of theatre more fully. Almost all observers judged the program an unqualified success.

The final Project Discovery offering of the season was Arthur Miller's adaptation of Ibsen's An Enemy of the People. The play was directed by Hall and began its run at the RISD auditorium late in March. The press gave the production a mixed review, but the students reacted very positively to it. It became even more relevant in early April after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. One high school junior, linking the play with the slaying, was quoted in a newspaper article as follows: "A man takes a stand and gets persecuted. After what happened last Thursday, it really hits home."

During April and May Joanna Featherstone returned to Rhode Island and again presented the program of American Negro Literature which had been so popular during the first Project Discovery season. In total she gave 41 performances in Rhode Island high schools that spring. Other members of Trinity Square also traveled to the schools for a total of 31 visits involving informal classroom interviews, panel discussions, or dramatic club meetings.

One other educational service was a weekly Project Discovery Theatre Workshop which began on Saturday April 20 and continued through May. Each of the six sessions ran from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon and involved a maximum of 200 participants selected from a state-wide group of applicants. The purpose of the workshop was to give interested students the chance to broaden their theatrical knowledge through working regularly with professionals. Music, dance, acting, directing, and other aspects of the theatre arts were discussed in lectures, and then the students were divided into sections and rotated between activities. The workshop was an immense success and was continued and expanded the following year.

Somewhat less of a success was the business management of Trinity Square. After John McQuiggan left in January of 1967, the theatre board president, Milton Stanzler, stepped in and tried to straighten out the complex bookkeeping situation. In June, Hilmar Sallee who had helped Repertory Theatre, New Orleans organize its business operation, came to Providence and worked with the company until September. The business chores were then placed in the hands of Newell Cook who later in the season was replaced by David Harper who remained with the company until August of 1968. So over a span of a little more than a year the books were managed by five different individuals, and none of them, apparently, found the job easy or appealing.

There was an average of 39 student performances of each of the three major productions in the Rhode Island School of Design Theatre. As the season progressed, it was generally agreed that there was an obvious growth in the artistic level of the company over the previous year. At the same time, actors reported they could tell the difference in student audiences--that students were a little more sophisticated and discriminating than in the previous season.

For the final non-Project production of the season, Hall chose Robert Lowell's version of Phaedra by Racine. It was another critical success (though one writer protested about the scanty costumes) and gave further proof that the company was evolving into a mature and cohesive ensemble.

During the first season, the theatre's Board of Trustees had contracted the firm of Morison/Fliehr Associates of Minneapolis to study the Trinity Square Repertory Company and report on ways to insure its growth. Among other things, the report suggested that an Alumni Club be initiated to encourage graduating seniors to return to the theatre. Special rates were offered to these alumni, but mailings concerning the program did not go out until the fall of the third season.

The Morison/Fliehr report also urged that the Board consider "immediate, emergency action to mobilize community support for a continuation of Project Discovery." Subsequently, Board President Milton Stanzler asked the Board to establish a Citizen's Committee for this purpose. However, it was not until the fall of the third season that two recently appointed members of the Board agreed to take responsibility as co-chairmen of the committee.

Near the season's end it was announced that Trinity would take its production of The Years of the Locust to the Edinburgh International Festival and that it was the first American regional theatre ever invited to do so.

New Orleans: The Second Year

Having recently completed a successful and harmonious first year, Shirley Trusty, David Scanlan, and nine New Orleans teachers who arrived in Providence for CEMREL's 1967 summer workshop were the center of attention. The Rhode Island teachers were envious, as their first year had not run smoothly, and the Los Angeles teachers, anticipating their inaugural year, sought answers to problems they already saw developing.

The key to New Orleans' initial success was a willingness to compromise both on the part of the theatre company and of the schools. Also, because the theatre and the Project had simultaneous beginnings, the Repertory Theatre's objectives were less at odds with the educational objectives of the Project. However, as the second season commenced, it became more and more apparent to the people in Repertory Theatre, New Orleans that if the company were to survive the cut off of federal funding, the theatre would have to develop an identity separate from the schools. So the second year in New Orleans was a time of growing apart, and, in retrospect, some have judged that the theatre did not grow far enough apart fast enough. In other words, the formula which had led to an enviable initial success turned out to be a potion which sapped the vitality of the theatre company and, by the end of the third year, guaranteed its death.

Twelve professional actors returned for their second season with the New Orleans theatre and 11 new members joined the company. By September they were involved in rehearsals for Arthur Miller's The Crucible which was scheduled to open to student audiences on October 11.

There was to be a larger student audience that year because schools from St. Bernard Parish had been added to those already participating from Orleans and Jefferson Parishes. Along with the usual curriculum package Miss Trusty gave each participating English and drama teacher a specially prepared L.P. record which contained introductory lectures about each of the season's plays. The study guides for the plays were once again written by David Scanlan and Miss Trusty and they were augmented by a wealth of additional materials. Also, as in previous years, each student received his own paperback copies of the four plays.

When The Crucible opened to adult audiences on October 20, it received mixed reviews in the press. One reviewer said it was "powerfully played," but another characterized the acting as "hard work...

perhaps too hard" and critized an actress for being "too forced." The play was enthusiastically received by the students, however, and it did quite well at the box office, too.

In conjunction with The Crucible the Educational Supervisor arranged for a special assembly program called "Conscience in Conflict" which toured to 30 different high schools. The program was directed and acted by members of the Repertory Company and was a hit with teachers and students. Another program which traveled to 21 high schools was Joanna Featherstone's presentation of Negro poetry. Miss Featherstone had been "jobbed-in for a role in The Crucible and remained afterward to do the in-school program. As had been the case in Rhode Island, the students gave Miss Featherstone a warm and enthusiastic response. Other assembly programs, which varied in content from school to school, were offered later in the year. The company also participated in four student press conferences during the season.

Another educational service was a series of theatre workshops on "The Craft of the Theatre." The first segment was conducted in early November and consisted of demonstrations and lectures on the technical aspects of theatre production. Gordon Micunis, scene designer, and Patrick Mitchell, technical director for the Repertory Company, led three day-long workshop sessions each of which were attended by approximately 1,500 students.

The second play of the season was Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. It was universally well received by the press, (one reviewer called it "an enchanted evening of entertainment") and was the greatest box office success of the season as well. The student response to this production was even more enthusiastic than for The Crucible and both school and theatre officials noted a general improvement in student audience behavior in comparison to the previous year.

The next set of school sponsored theatre workshops, entitled "The Art of Mine," was held early in January. Tony Montanaro, a well known pantominist, was brought to New Orleans by Miss Trusty to lead the workshop sessions. He captivated the student audiences with demonstrations of his art and followed his performance with an exploration of the disciplines involved in achieving specific effects.

January was also a time of crisis for the theatre. The problem by then was a familiar one: the rental of the theatre building. The Civic Theatre management wanted a $20,000 advance on the following year's $75,000 lease. They were asking for it by the 15th of the month and the funds simply were not available. The dispute between the owners and the theatre company's general manager was publicized in the daily newspapers, and the issue became a cause for student action. Some began a drive to raise money for the theatre. Over 100 other students marched on the mayor's office and asked him to support Repertory Theatre, both with a contribution and with his influence in the business community. The youngsters organized a group called Teens 'n Theatre (T 'n T), and by the time the dispute was settled in Mid-May they had raised about $3,000 in support of the theatre. The final rental contract for the third season was for $55,000.

Late in January, Vaughan presented his third play of the season, Shaw's St. Joan. It was praised by the critics as having "great merit" and as being "a living emotional experience." The students reacted a little less enthusiastically to this wordy drama according to some in-theatre observers, but the weekly National Observer in a feature article on the Project noted that though the play is "hardly typical teen-age fare...[the students] strain to catch the words. They boo the proper villians and practically shatter the crystal chandeliers with cheers when Joan tears up her confession and chooses death at the stake."

The last of the school-sponsored student workshops were held in February and were concerned with costuming and the theatre. They were conducted by the company's costume designer Gordon Micunis and his assistant, Matthew Ryan. The history of costume design in the theatre was presented with the use of slides and costumes from the Educational Laboratory Theatre Productions. Much of the information in this workshop was later compiled into a filmstrip which was distributed to teachers the following year.

A fourth group of workshops was planned for the spring but Miss Viola Spolin, an authority on improvisation who was to conduct these sessions, suffered a broken ankle and the meetings had to be canceled. Total student attendance at the 1967-68 drama workshop series was 9,060, with 48 of the 53 high schools participating in them.

The final Project play of the season was Moliere's Tartuffe, in the Richard Wilbur translation. It opened to the public in early March and received appreciative reviews in the local newspapers. The students particularly liked the broad farcical moments in the play and this production ranked along with The Crucible and A Midsummer Night's Dream in popularity. It is interesting to note that whereas the parochial schools dropped out of the program during the showing of Tartuffe in Los Angeles, parochial school attendance at the theatre increased during the run of the play in New Orleans.

In addition to the four plays for the schools, the Repertory Theatre presented a bonus program of one-act plays to its subscribers. The program consisted of "The American Dream" by Edward Albee, "Act Without Words II" by Samuel Beckett, and "The Marriage Proposal" by Anton Cheknov. Performed at Tulane University under the direction of David Scanlan, it was given for eight, sold-out performances during late March and early April.

At the close of the second season the theatre company heard about Trinity Square's idea of starting an Alumni Club, and it too printed up a special discount card which in the fall was mailed out to about 2,500 1968 graduates.

As a final service for teachers that year the Educational Supervisor planned a summer institute on "Approaches to the Teaching of Dramatic Literature Through Improvisational Techniques." The June session was conducted by Robert Alexander, director of the Arena Stage Theatre for Children in Washington, D.C., and his assistant, Norman Gevanthor, and attended by 25 parochial and public school teachers.

During the second season there had been more frequent signs of friction between the theatre and the schools. Stuart Vaughan was annoyed by the fact that a disproportionate amount of newspaper publicity was devoted to the educational aspects of the Project; this, he believed, gave the public the impression that Repertory Theatre was more of a visual aid for teachers than it was a source of entertainment for potential ticket buyers. He also expressed irritation at what the Educational Supervisor spent for things he felt to be irrelevant--such as summer teacher workshops and guest speakers from out of town. Shirley Trusty, on the other hand, felt that her efforts and loyalties had to be devoted to capitalizing as much as possible on the educational opportunities opened up by the Project. To her that meant keeping the achievements and activities of students in the news and providing supplementary training for both students and teachers.

There was a certain amount of friction concerning the selection of plays for the third reason, too. Though differences in this area were amicably resolved, as the 1967-68 season drew to a close the air of tension contrasted with the ebullient optimism which had characterized the end of the first year.

The May Meeting: 1968

Officials in Washington felt that it would be useful at the end of the 1967-68 season for key personnel from all three Project sites to get together, compare experiences, and discuss both the original objectives and possible future goals of the pilot programs. Consequently, Junius Eddy invited three representatives from each site to come to Washington for a meeting late in May. Representatives from CEMREL were also invited to present a slightly more objective "outsider's" progress report and to answer questions about the nature and scope of the research being done in relation to the Project.

Over 20 people participated in the two day meeting, some of the key participants being, Adrian Hall, Rose Vallely, Stuart Vaughan, Shirley Trusty, Jack Jackson, Georg Stern, Katherine Booom, Roger Stevens, and Wade Robinson. After reviewing the achievements at each site up to that date, the discussants spent quite a bit of time talking about what seemed to be the worst common source of trouble: play selection. No one was able to suggest a single "best" way to handle this aspect of the Project, but many of the variables that affect the play selection process were described and all the participants became a little bit more aware of the complexities which must be considered and the kinds of conflicts one might expect.

On behalf of CEMREL Dr. Fannie Handrick, then Director of Theatre Research, made some comments drawn from the site visit reports written by the Advisory group to the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. She said that without exception these advisors were "with the people" and had complimented everyone connected with the project. Dr. Handrick further reported that the Advisory group had been impressed with the curriculum packages but felt they gave too great an emphasis to drama as literature rather than as a performing art. Dr. Handrick also answered questions about the research CEMREL was conducting and what it was planning for the coming year.

Two other topics discussed at the meeting were the multiplicity of goals and the availability of funds after the third year. After one and two years of working with the ELT Program, the participants acknowledged that the goals of Washington officials, school system representatives, theatre companies, and teachers were often different and sometimes in conflict. Dr. Robinson noted that CEMREL was conducting a study to determine how various participant's goals differed.

The Rhode Island participants told of a Citizen's Action Group being formed to seek funds for a possible fourth year of Project Discovery. But there was little hope for the massive kind of support the Project was then receiving. Representatives from each of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project locations expressed further concern that they be aided financially beyond the third year of the project, and they discussed the possibilities of foundation, state, and local support.

Almost everyone agreed that something very positive was happening in each of the sites, though several noted that the real impact (or lack of impact) of the Project might not be known for 10 to 20 years.

The meeting succeeded in giving the chief decision makers connected with the Project an opportunity to see more clearly how their individual roles combined with the jurisdictional responsibilities of others in this immensely complex program.

Los Angeles: The Second Year

With Jackson now at the helm, the ICCC, with no artistic director and a multitude of financial troubles, began pulling itself together during the summer of 1968. Jackson was confident he could get the company in gear for a strong second season and foresaw a healthy mixture of other cultural activities for the center. Of major importance was the addition of a Ford Foundation grant for an apprentice program at the Center in the fields of theatre arts and communications. While learning the technical skills, each trainee would actually have a chance to work on various productions at the ICCC. It was also the feeling of Jackson and board members of the ICCC that artistic directors could successfully be jobbed for each production and that, since Los Angeles afforded such a large market from which to draw actors for special roles, a nucleus of about 12 returning actors for the permanent company would be sufficient.

The plays for the second season were selected by school committees working in conjunction with ICRC officials. As in New Orleans, the schools strongly influenced final decisions but tried to leave room for artistic necessities and preferences. After numerous meetings between Stern, Gass, Jackson and others, the second season was announced as: A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry, Our Town by Thornton Wilder, Macbeth by Shakespeare and West Side Story by Arthur Laurents. The last choice was somewhat tentative and dependent on the ICRC's finding ways to cut down on the potentially high production costs involved in doing a musical with such a large cast. Some 27,000 students from the 11th grades in 47 public and 19 private and parochial schools were scheduled to attend the four productions at the ICCC the second season.

In addition to the Laboratory Theatre schedule, the ICRC planned to offer the general public El Manco, a new play by a Mexican-American author, Josef Rodriquez, and one by an American-Indian, Elmatha A. Marshall, entitled Eagle Boy.

Beginning with the curriculum portfolios for A Raisin in the Sun Bill Gass adopted as standard policy a procedure which had worked well in the creation of The Sea Gull portfolio. He included lesson plans written by several Los Angeles teachers so that the B-11 teachers who received the packet could choose from a variety of possibilities the approach to the play they felt most comfortable with. The Raisin in the Sun packet had separate lessons geared to high middle, and low track students. It also contained the other by now standard materials: background information, bibliographies, and bulletin board displays.

Dr. Stern also held meetings and workshops prior to each production in order to give teachers information and ideas they might use to prime their students for the upcoming play. For the season's opener many of the teachers were participating in the project for the first time, and 250 of them gathered to meet the Project Coordinator and ICCC director Jack Jackson. Stern and Jackson reviewed the nature of the Project in general and then discussed the plays selected for the 1968-69 season.

The cast for Raisin in the Sun included Academy Award nominee Beah Richards and eleven other prominent artists from the field of stage, screen and television. Actor Sidney Poitier and producer-director Frank Silvera, served as special consultants. It opened on September 20 and was well received both by the students and the press. Most educators felt the production, directed by Hal DeWindt, was a relevant and suitable one for the schools. Some, however, felt that even this play was too dated to have a significant impact on Los Angeles students. Everyone was in agreement, though, that the season began on a much happier note than had the previous year with Tartuffe.

Jackson decided to direct Our Town himself, using a multi-racial cast. Our Town had long been a standard text in eleventh grade literature courses, so instead of discussing the play at the pre-performance meeting for teachers, Dr. Stern featured Los Angeles Times drama critic, Cecil Smith as guest speaker. The meeting was attended by 170 teachers.

The Wilder play opened late in November and received mixed reviews in the press. Student audiences liked the youthful stage manager with his jaunty manner and dress and they enjoyed his initial entrance accompanied by a background of soft rock music, but they sometimes grew restless during the three acts that followed.

The after-performance discussions continued to be lively throughout the second season and it was clear that students both enjoyed and profited from the opportunity to ask questions. The question most frequently asked after Our Town was "Why the integrated cast?" to which the standard reply was "It's an integrated world."

Running concurrently with Our Town was the production of El Manco. It was directed by David Wille and represented the ICRC's first attempt to do an original drama.

Critics called the author, Josef Rodriguez, a promising playwright and termed the play moving and dramatic, although uneven in artistic quality. A second original production, Eagle Boy, by Elmatha Marshall also directed by Wille, was offered later in the season but withdrawn from production after about two weeks and prior to an official opening.

A series of four workshops entitled "The Professional Theatre in Action" were held during the first half of the theatre season at the Inner City Cultural Center. The first. "Actors in Action." was limited to fifty teachers of English drama or speech who attended portions of rehearsals of Our Town and El Manco. Teachers talked to the directors of both shows about their methods and interpretations. "Stage Design in Action" followed a few days later with 23 teachers attending. The stage facilities of the Inner City Cultural Center were demonstrated and teachnical problems in the area of scenic design, lighting, props, and sound were all discussed by members of the professional staff.

Early in December the third workshop, "The Play in Action Critically Examined," consisted of a lively discussion between the actors and director of Our Town and approximately 25 English teachers. The concept, direction, and acting of that play made up the content of the program. The fourth and last meeting the following week, "Theatre Photography in Action," was attended by ten teachers and 25 students. It consisted of talks by a staff photographer from the Los Angeles Times and the press director of the ICCC. At the end students had the opportunity to photograph actors.

The third Project play was Macbeth. Miss Beah Richards, who had won strong critical acclaim for her portrayal of Lena in A Raisin in the Sun, was cast as Lady Macbeth and Yaphet Kotto played the title role. Prior to this production the Project Coordinator dispensed with the usual in-service meeting and offered instead a special television program on the production, filmed and broadcast by the Los Angeles educational television station.

Macbeth, directed by John MacKay, opened on January 22, 1969 and was severly panned by students, reviewers, teachers, and the general public. Jackson defended the production as being more relevant for black viewers, but he found few who agreed with him. One reviewer's article, which pretty well typified the reaction in the press, was titled: "Macbeth: 'A' for Effort, 'F' for Performance." It went on to say:

> If the Inner City Repertory Company's sole purpose in its performance of Shakespeare's Macbeth is to prove that color is no longer a barrier in the theatre, then it has definitely triumphed. On the other hand, if it is to create a powerful and artistic study of Macbeth then it has fallen far short of its goal....
>
> The Company simply has yet to develop the active interplay between the actors which is so vital to presenting a Shakespearean tragedy.

Some educators went so far as to advise their students not to go to Macbeth.

Reports of financial problems within the company and misunderstandings between funding agencies, along with complaints about an artistically disappointing Macbeth, led Roger Stevens to become concerned about the stability and effectiveness of the ELT Project in Los Angeles. In early February he and several other officials visited Los Angeles to learn first hand the problems confronting the ICRC. They discovered that most of the problems could be traced back to financial mismanagement during the first season, before Jackson took over. Even the uneven quality of the plays could be attributed partly to the lack of money. Stevens was satisfied that the Project was functioning satisfactorily in the circumstances, and he subsequently recommended a third year of funding for the program.

Again during the second season a number of the actors visited high schools in addition to appearing on stage. Accompanied by the Project Coordinator on many of the occasions, they appeared informally in classrooms and in auditoriums. The actors lectured, assisted high school drama groups with production techniques, and even judged oratical contests. They also again participated in press conferences at the theatre.

The Inner City Cultural Center's activities included much more than the six productions of the Repertory Company. It had a touring ensemble which presented works by minority authors, playwrights and composers to any interested group in the nearby communities. The ensemble was part of the Langston-Hughes Memorial Library, dedicated to preserving works by and about the cultural and artistic lives of Afro-Americans, Asian-Americans, American-Indians and Spanish-speaking Americans. There was also a popular Writer's Workshop on Sunday afternoons, and, too, there were special ethnic nights, art and dance exhibits and even cartoon programs for the youngsters.

By February it was clear that the ICRC could not do West Side Story. Jackson had steadily made progress in paying off the debts from the first season, but the financial situation was far from being cleared up. It made little sense to end the season with an expensive production. After a great many meetings with school representatives, it was finally decided to do The Fantasticks by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt.

The choice was a happy one (with the exception of one minor incident[1]) and the production, directed by Lonny Chapman, was enthusiastically received by almost everyone. Critics found Chapman's rock interpretation fresh and challenging without violating the play's romantic spirit. The actors appreciated the opportunity to let themselves go a little. Educators breathed a sigh of relief after the disaster of Macbeth. And the students just plain enjoyed themselves. So the season closed on a bright and hopeful note even though there had been several moments of despair during the course of the year.

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[1] An associate superintendent ruled that a song containing the word "rape" (i.e. abduction) would have to be deleted from the production. ICCC had to agree; the newspapers played up the dispute; and the students, many of whom had read the play in class, did not find their respect for the judgment of school officials was enhanced. (See the "Student Reactions" chapter of this volume.)

Rhode Island: The Third Year

Returning from a critical triumph in Edinburgh (which included the opportunity to see productions by European theatre companies and to meet theatre innovators such as Jerzy Grotowsky, director of the Theatre Laboratory of Wroclaw, Poland), the Trinity Square Repertory Company began preparing for its sixth season and the third year of Project Discovery. For his first production that fall, Adrian Hall had selected Red Roses for Me by Sean O'Casey. The nucleus of the resident company had returned for the new season and was joined for Red Roses by the famed British interpreter of Gilbert and Sullivan, Martyn Green.

Rose Valley and Richard Cumming continued to supply teachers with curriculum portfolios for each of the plays as well as to provide the other educational services that were available during the previous years. Rhode Island had been selected by CEMREL as the site for its Experimental Teaching Study. The study had the effect of bringing teachers from many different schools together about three times during the course of the year, and this, in turn, gave the teachers a greater awareness of the wider implications of the Project. The study also greatly complicated the lives and jobs of people like Miss Valley and Mrs. Charlotte von Breton, CEMREL's representative in Rhode Island. However, the smoothness with which the experimental study was carried out is indicative of the air of understanding and cooperation that typified the Rhode Island Project during the 1968-69 season.

Red Roses for Me opened on October 3 and was generally well received. Almost all of the newspaper critics praised the production, but one or two questioned the relevancy of the play itself. Similar opinions were expressed by some teachers who had reservations about the significance of the play for today's teenager and considered it a step down from the provocative An Enemy of the People which had been so popular the previous season.

Because of budget cutbacks, only about 30 performances of each student show were given during the third season as opposed to 39 or 40 the preceeding one. A new edition of Rhode Show was also scheduled to replace the fourth in-theatre production. Students were assured of seeing at least two out of three full scale productions. Most schools handled this by taking two of the three grades each time. Again, the scheduling and transportation details were carried out smoothly with one exception when a major snow storm forced the cancellation of one or two performances in February.

Three shows in addition to those for Project Discovery were scheduled for the adult audience in the Trinity Square playhouse. The first of these productions followed Red Roses in November. It was the presentation of Brother to Dragons, a poetic drama by Robert Penn Warren. The production, distinctive in its staging and acting, was recognized in local and national reviews as a unique theatre contribution of great sensitivity and brutal impact. It also marked another distinct artistic step away from traditional theatre on the part of Hall and his set designer, Eugene Lee. This and all of their subsequent productions were designed to "reach out" into the audience with the object of intensifying the relationship between actor and viewer.

This was certainly true of the season's third major production, and the second Project Discovery play, Macbeth, which opened on January 2. The Rhode Island School of Design auditorium was rebuilt with scaffolding extending to the left and right of the stage and half way into the auditorium. The action, movement, and pageantry caught up the student audiences and again drew enthusiastic notices from the national and local press. However, despite the play's dramatic excitement, several critics did not feel that the acting of the company was as balanced as that in the earlier productions of the season. A few teachers complained about Hall's robust interpretation of the Shakespeare play, too, but for the most part educators felt that here was a production that fully succeeded in making the bard "come alive."

January was a busy time for Trinity Square in another respect. The Citizens Committee set up by the Board of Trustees the previous spring had not really become functional until the fall when two Board members, Mrs. Noel Field and Mrs. Stanley Summers, agreed to spearhead a drive for community support of Project Discovery in its fourth year. However, due to prior commitments the co-chairmen were unable to organize until just before Christmas. In January they and their committee bombarded local school boards with information about the current success of the Project and its future cost.

In case after case, members of the Committee were surprised to find school board members who had not heard of Project Discovery or were not sure just what it was. Most of these people, when the scope of the Project was explained to them, reacted with approval and thought the Project sounded like a fine idea.

The committee was supported by educators such as Dr. William Robinson, State Commissioner of Education, and Mr. Donald Gardner, the English supervisor in the State Department of Education. Later in the spring, Gardner in particular devoted much of his time to the "Save Project Discovery" campaign. The committee was also supported by administrators, teachers, and students, who represented the case for the Project to their school committees, their legislators, and the state government.

In conjunction with the production of Macbeth, actor-director Henry Butler again toured as a special educational service to the schools. His assembly program entitled "Willie's Killers," consisted of a dramatic comparison of Shakespeare's Richard III, Hamlet, and Macbeth. In total, Butler visited 30 schools.

A six-week drama workshop series for students begun in January proved so popular that two sessions were held each Saturday in order to accommodate more students, and the series was extended an additional six weeks into the spring. The workshops were similar in format to the ones that had been offered the previous spring, and about 250 students from all over Rhode Island attended each Saturday. In addition, two special teacher workshops were held in the form of lecture-forums.

Again, throughout the season, members of the company were available for consultation, advice and lectures in the schools and tours of the scenery and costume shops were offered those students interested in technical aspects of productions.

The Homecoming by Harold Pinter was presented in February to community subscribers in the Trinity Square playhouse. This production, staged by Pirie Macdonald, reflected the repertory company's desire to challenge the local theatre-going population through realistic contemporary drama.

As its third Project Discovery production the company presented a stage version of Herman Melville's Billy Budd. The set of this spring offering once again extended well into the auditorium and consisted of a reconstructed 18th century warship. The production, which strove to involve all the audiences' senses, drew wildly enthusiastic plaudits from students, teachers, and drama critics. Henry Hewes in the Saturday Review commented that

> Just about the most encouraging thing that has happened in the resident theatre company movement this season is the emergence of a really vital production organization here at the Trinity Square Repertory Company.

He continued with special praise for the unique staging of Macbeth and Billy Budd and about the latter noted:

> Instead of presenting the material as a melodrama of malice and eighteenth-century naval injustice, this production seems to be aiming at giving the audience a feeling of what life on any warship is like, as well as the brutality of any war.

In all, the play provided a fitting climax to the third Project Discovery season.

Following Billy Budd a group of actors from the company once again made appearances in schools throughout the state with a new "Rhode Show," supplementing the students' experiences in the theatre. Excerpts from The Odd Couple by Neil Simon and Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett illustrated characters in isolation, while excerpts from Mary of Scotland by Maxwell Anderson, "The Man With the Flower in His Mouth" by Luigi Pirandello and poetry by Bertolt Brecht and Carl Sandburg illustrated characters in confrontation. Schools were advised to keep their participating students to 200 or fewer in order for the encounters to be most effective. A question and answer period followed the selected scenes in each of the 24 schools the actors visited.

Meanwhile the campaign to "Save Project Discovery" had been gaining momentum, and it reached a climax on April 25 when about 1,000 Rhode Island high school students marched to the state house in Providence and presented a 40-foot long petition bearing thousands of signatures to Lt. Governor J. Joseph Garrahy. The signatures were only a fraction of the more than 25,000 that had been collected by the Citizens Committee, and, in response to this overwhelming show of interest, Governor Frank Licht proclaimed May as "Project Discovery Month" and pledged $40,000 from his contingency funds to cover administrative costs, curriculum materials, and books for the following year. In addition, about 20 school districts out of 31 appropriated funds (in the amount of about $2.50 per student for two plays) to continue the Project in the fourth year.

The theatre company had less success with another campaign that season. Early in 1968 Trinity Square had bought and stored the ANTA theatre building which had been dismantled in New York City. It hoped that with the proceeds of a capital funds drive it would be possible to erect the building in one of several locations in the Providence area. The 1,145 seating capacity of the ANTA building would allow the company to accomodate larger adult audiences and to avoid the scheduling problems involved in using the RISD theatre for Project Discovery. However, in spite of considerable editorial prodding by the local newspapers, city officials were never able to agree on a proper site for the facility, the capital funds drive was postponed, and the theatre remained in storage.

The company's final non-Project offering of the season was The Exiles by James Joyce, a production punctuated by vivid character portrayals, forceful artistic direction, and an intriguing use of slides and film clips to illuminate the stage dialogue. The performances and direction received universally high praise in the press, though several critics faulted the play itself.

One other achievement for the company that year was its greater stability in the business department. Trinity managed to get through an entire season with a single person, Barton Emmet, handling the finances. There still were problems and there had been internal conflicts resulting in personnel changes , but the situation was clearly less chaotic than it had been during previous seasons. Emmet, however, seemed a little insensitive to the needs of the schools as he began to plan for the following year. He viewed the Project pretty much as a business operation and failed to recognize fully that education was also part of the theatre's business.

Nevertheless, at the Season's close the future for Project Discovery looked bright, even though there were a few signs of possible school-theatre conflicts ahead.

New Orleans: The Third Year

The summer of 1968 was a fairly quiet one in New Orleans and the relationship between the schools and the theatre remained cool. There was polite cooperation but each party also was becoming more aware of the sometimes conflicting interests of the two parties. Shirley Trusty continued to receive help from David Scanlan and other theatre personnel in planning and compiling information for curriculum portfolios. Scanlan wrote the study guides. The theatre's director, scene, and costume designer provided information about their respective roles in producing a play. Former scene and costume designer Gordon Micunis also helped Miss Trusty produce a filmstrip on costuming which was distributed to the schools in the fall. Nevertheless communication between schools and theatre was somewhat muted.

The Civic Theatre was booked for a touring company in October so the Laboratory Theatre Project's third season was not scheduled to open until early November. The first play was to be Shaw's Arms and the Man and Vaughan began rehearsals the second week in October. Six new actors joined 16 members of the ensemble who had been with the company in previous years.

On October 31 a one-day conference brought teachers and theatre personnel together and officially opened the season with a show of anticipation and good-will. Several Washington officials and national personalities attended the conference and members of the theatre company again offered their services to the schools.

Arms and the Man opened to students on November 11, and there was a very gala opening night for adults on November 22, with Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson and other dignitaries attending the premiere. The First Lady chose New Orleans as the place to begin her final official tour and accompanying her were members of The National Council on the Arts and a party of movie stars and entertainment personalities. Her presence called attention both to the beginning of Repertory Theatre, New Orleans' third season and to the fact that this was the final year of the federal project.

The play itself was a distinct hit with the students; at the end of the year when they were polled about which plays they enjoyed most over the three seasons, Arms and the Man ranked second only to Charley's Aunt. The play was enjoyed by adults, too, and netted a fairly good box office return although it received mixed reviews in the press. With this play, as he had done with Charley's Aunt, Vaughan chose to raise the curtain during a scene change and the stage manager explained to the students what some of the stage crew's responsibilities were.

In December, the Educational supervisor began a new workshop series for speech and drama students. Tony Montanaro returned to New Orleans to conduct three "Mine Workshops" similar to the ones he had led during the 1968-69 season. The program was enthusiastically received and a total of 3,400 students had a chance to watch and work with the talented pantominist. Montanaro and his assistant, Michael Henry, also conducted a workshop for teachers.

The second project play was Shakespeare's Twelfth Night. It was warmly welcomed by reviewers and was the biggest box office attraction of the season. During the run of the play through January into early February, two members of the company trouped to a number of the high schools with a skit designed to prepare students for a more meaningful encounter with Shakespeare. Most students enjoyed both the assembly program and the stage production, but the play ranked low in popularity when students compared it to the 11 other Project offerings.

Shortly after Twelfth Night opened, another 3,000 students participated in the second of the theatre workshop series. This time Viola Spolin, author of a widely used and highly regarded text on improvisation, was the featured artist. In each of the three sessions Miss Soplin had student volunteers on stage and skillfully led them through a series of improvisational games. She did the same thing with teachers in two evening workshops.

An activity which was planned to coincide with Miss Spolin's workshop appearances was a symposium on "Improvisation and the Teaching of Literature" hosted jointly by CEMREL and the New Orleans school systems. The symposium not only brought together many authorities in theatre, English, education and related disciplines, it also afforded an opportunity for the New Orleans teachers who had participated in the improvisational workshop the summer before to meet again and weigh their experiences in the light of the points of view expressed at the symposium. (A report of the proceedings of this conference may be obtained by writing Mrs. Verna Smith, Public Information Officer, CEMREL, Inc.)

The third Project play of the season was to be a new version of Ibsen's An Enemy of the People. Assistant Director of Repertory Theatre, New Orleans, David Scanlan, had written the translation and he also was scheduled to direct the production. Shirley Trusty had made arrangements with Bantam Books to have Scanlan's version of the play printed in a paperback which would also include other selections on the theme of "the individual versus society."

The paperback was titled Protest: Man Against Society, and when it was issued to the schools a vocal protest against Protest ensued. Objections arose from parents, teachers, principals and even local politicians concerning the suitability of the book for high school students. Most who complained felt the supplementary selections were inflammatory or subversive. The clamor over the book continued during February and March. Several schools cancelled their scheduled theatre visits to An Enemy of the People; a petition denouncing the book was circulated by the Woman's Auxiliary to the Chamber of Commerce; several school principals refused to distribute the books in their schools; and at least one principal gave Protest to teachers with instructions that the books were not to leave the classrooms and that students were only to read the play--not the essays. Objections were raised in all the school districts, including the Catholic Archdiocese, but most of the controversy seemed to be in Jefferson Parish where the question of whether or not to recall the book went before the School Board and was discussed in at least three board meetings. The controversy finally died down, and most people who wanted to use the anthology did so.

The production of the play itself caused little controversy and the box office failed to benefit from the notoriety of the book. The press gave the production warm praise and commended Scanlan for his ability to intermix humor and pathos. However, the students response was less enthusiastic. Some were caught up with the serious theme while others found the play more talky and less humorous than the two previous offerings of the season.

During the third season, the T 'n Ts remained active, supporting the theatre in a variety of ways. The group had a membership of about 85 with an active core of about 40. The theatre also organized some into an Ushers Club and offered them a Creative Workshop each Saturday during the spring at the Public Library. The workshop featured sessions on writing, directing, improvisation, set design, and lighting and general conversations on all phases of the theatre with members of the company. There was one unique session held to prepare for a television program during the height of the skirmish over the book, Protest. The television show was set up by the theatre and designed to present to the public a group of knowledgeable students calmly discussing the merits of the entire Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. The T 'n Ts also continued rallies and fund-raising efforts on behalf of the theatre well into the spring.

However, the organization which should have been striving for financial and moral public support of the Repertory Company from the beginning--its Board of Trustees--was not active. Part of the fault for this inactivity was Vaughan's. He had had previous conflicts with boards of directors, and he had gotten himself, in New Orleans, a quiet, "name-only" board.

When it was finally realized that, if the theatre were to remain in New Orleans, massive efforts toward widely-based public support and fund-raising must be undertaken, it was too late. The board members for the most part were accustomed to their roles and not ready to undertake hard work. In the spring of 1969 the board resigned so that a new, stronger one could be organized with the aim of gaining stability for the theatre.

In mid-March Carolyn Durand, assistant to Repertory Theatre's scene designer, Lloyd Burlingame, conducted a third school sponsored workshop for speech and drama students. Approximately 800 students a day, for three days, attended the sessions concerned with the technical aspects of producing a play.

Though this service suggests that the schools and theatre continued to work cooperatively, in actuality communications between the two became increasingly strained. Miss Trusty, for instance, was not informed about the T 'n T workshops until they had been going on for several weeks. Also, there were several small disputes concerning the final Project offering, a twin bill of Ionesco's "The Bald Soprano" and "The Chairs."

One involved a touring show the Educational Supervisor was planning as a prelude to the students in-theatre exposure to "theatre of the absurd." Initially the assembly program was to be developed jointly with some members of the Repertory Theatre staff; however, the collaborators could not agree about its content and format. David Scanlan, who wanted to keep the show non-didactic, bowed out as one of the writers, and Shirley Trusty engaged a local director, George Sanchez, and had to seek "outside" writers and performers. The show, which eventually toured to 37 of the 50 schools scheduled to see the Ionesco plays, carried a three-part message: (a) that "Theatre of the Absurd" focuses on failures in communication, (b) that it breaks away from traditional patterns, and (c) that it is modern. Fast-moving and performed by a group of spirited actors, it was well received by the student audiences. Each performance was followed by question and answer periods, some in the school auditoriums but most of them in smaller classroom settings where individual performers could talk more informally with the students. (See the study of the effects of this show in Volume 2 of this report.)

A second dispute over the final production involved a request by the theatre to reduce the number of school performances because of financial cutbacks; however, it was quickly and amicably resolved.

A third conflict involved the production itself. School officials requested that certain lines and bits of stage business (including a strobe-lit tearing off of outer garments) be cut from "The Bald Soprano." The request drew protests about censorship, but the deletions were made for the student audiences.

The Ionesco bill opened in April and received favorable reviews in the newspapers. The student audiences reacted with glee, particularly to the directorial slapstick in "The Bald Soprano." (Vaughan directed "Soprano" while Scanlan directed "The Chairs.") None of the students seemed aware that they were viewing a bowdlerized version of the play. The more sophisticated evening version provoked a mixed reaction in the general public. Some viewers enjoyed the highly theatrical performances while others, especially the older theatre-goers, did not seem to care for the "avant-garde" plays. The production did not do well at the box office.

There were the usual press conferences during the third season, but one final instance of conflict between the schools and theatre occurred in April. Stuart Vaughan was contracted to lead a fourth school-sponsored theatre workshop on play direction. About 400 students attended on the first day and he used a scene from The Taming of the Shrew to demonstrate different possible directorial interpretations. The Educational Supervisor felt some of his interpretations were too sensational and requested that he modify them on the following days. After the second day she was still dissatisfied and consequently cancelled the third session.

As a final non-Project production, the repertory company did Noel Coward's Private Lives to close the season. Vaughan felt the comedy would have special appeal to the adult audiences and he was right. It proved to be a popular choice and was praised for its smooth direction and first-rate performances.

At the season's close, prospects for a fourth year of school-theatre collaboration seemed remote The repertory company announced it would have another season the next year and a more extensive one. However, the schools, without funds and apparently without any strong motivation to seek funds, were making no plans to offer a portion of the theatre program to student audiences. The future theatre-going of high school students in the area, after having been encouraged so significantly, would apparently be left up to the individual teachers and to the students themselves.

Insert Tables 1 Through 4 Here

TABLE 1. Summary of Productions for the

ELT Project, 1966-67 Season

Title of Play	Director	Date Opened	# Student Performances	Student Attend.	Avg.
RHODE ISLAND					
ST. JOAN	Adrian Hall	10/04/66	37	35,232	952
AH, WILDERNESS	Rocco Bufano	12/07/66	40	30,357	759
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM	Louis Beachner	3/06/67	40	33,846	846
THREE SISTERS	Adrian Hall	4/27/67	38	31,643	833
NEW ORLEANS					
CHARLEY'S AUNT	Stuart Vaughan	11/15/66	29	38,969	1,344
ROMEO AND JULIET	Stuart Vaughan	1/05/67	29	35,575	1,226
OUR TOWN	Stuart Vaughan	2/21/67	29	34,845	1,201
THE RIVALS	Stuart Vaughan	4/04/67	29	32,552	1,122

TABLE 2. Summary of Productions for the
ELT Project, 1967-1968 Season

Title of Play	Director	Date Opened	# Student Performances	Student Attend.	Avg.
LOS ANGELES					
TARTUFFE	Andre Gregory	9/10/67	30	18,660	622
GLASS MENAGERIE	Lonny Chapman	11/09/67	37	23,514	635
SEA GULL	Alfred Ryder	2/01/68	37	19,442	525
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM	Malcolm Black	4/03/68	37	22,061	596
RHODE ISLAND					
JULIUS CAESAR	Adrian Hall	11/06/67	40	32,059	801
IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST	Henry Butler	1/02/67	39	30,783	789
THE RHODE SHOW			38	7,200*	200*
MARRIAGE PROPOSAL	Robert van Hooten				
MAN WITH A FLOWER IN HIS MOUTH	Ronald Frazier				
ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE	Adrian Hall	3/21/68	38	27,990	736
NEW ORLEANS					
THE CRUCIBLE	Stuart Vaughan	10/11/67	28	34,549	1,234
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM	Stuart Vaughan	11/27/67	29	32,640	1,125
ST. JOAN	Stuart Vaughan	1/17/68	29	31,880	1,099
TARTUFFE	Stuart Vaughan	2/29/68	29	30,680	1,058

* Approximate number; precise figures not available.

TABLE 3. Summary of Productions for the

ELT Project, 1968-1969 Season

Title of Play	Director	Date Opened	# Student Performance	Student Attend.	Avg.
LOS ANGELES					
RAISIN IN THE SUN	Hal DeWindt	9/20/68	31	24,191	780
OUR TOWN	Jack Jackson	11/22/68	31	21,217	684
MACBETH	John MacKay	1/22/69	31	19,962	643
THE FANTASTICKS	Lonny Chapman	4/23/69	31	19,462	628
RHODE ISLAND					
RED ROSES FOR ME	Adrian Hall	10/17/68	24	23,786	991
MACBETH	Adrian Hall	1/02/69	34	24,419	718
BILLY BUDD	Adrian Hall	3/20/69	32	23,900*	747
THE RHODE SHOW			40	8,000*	200
NEW ORLEANS					
ARMS AND THE MAN	Stuart Vaughan	11/12/68	27	37,645	1,394
TWELFTH NIGHT	Stuart Vaughan	1/10/69	27	35,473	1,314
ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE	David Scanlan	2/28/69	27	33,492	1,240
BALD SOPRANO and THE CHAIRS	Stuart Vaughan David Scanlan	4/11/69	24	22,931	955

* Approximate number; precise figures not available.

TABLE 4. Summary of Productions for the

ELT Project, 1969-1970 Season*

Title of Play	Director	Date Opened	# Student Performance	Student Attend.	Avg.
LOS ANGELES					
WEST SIDE STORY	Lonny Chapman	10/06/69	25	18,855	754
ROOM SERVICE	Nagle Jackson	11/13/69	25	15,395	616
ANTIGONE	Owen Dodson	2/13/70	25	17,368	695
BALD SOPRANO	Abel Franco	2/13/70	58	26,753	461
RHODE ISLAND					
OLD GLORY	Adrian Hall	9/30/69	18	9,859	548
WILSON IN THE PROMISE LAND	Adrian Hall	12/09/69	15	7,417	495
SKIN OF OUR TEETH	Adrian Hall	1/13/70	17	10,423	613
LOVECRAFT'S FOLLIES	Adrian Hall	3/10/70	13	7,606	585
THE RHODE SHOW		2/06/70			
SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY			61		
THE FACES OF WAR			42		
			103	15,450**	150**

*The reorganized Repertory Theatre, New Orleans opened its season in March and took a touring program to 24 New Orleans area high schools during the final weeks of the school term.

**Approximate number; precise figures not available.

The most distinctive thing about the ICRC continued to be its use of interracial casts. A few students and one reviewer were bothered by the casting in West Side Story because, they said, it was impossible to tell the gangs apart. By and large, though, the audiences accepted the company on its own terms and without comment.

The second Project play was the farce Room Service by John Murray and Allen Boretz. Nagle Jackson who had recently directed the play in San Francisco was engaged to direct the ICRC version. Since it was a farce and of no great literary consequence, Gass and Stern did not have a pre-performance in-service meeting for teachers and the curriculum portfolios were kept very simple. Gass also decided not to make copies of the play available. The production which opened for students on November 13 was described by critics as "adequate," enjoyable for the students, but not particularly good professional theatre. Pupil attendance at this production was the lowest of all of the Project plays over the entire three years. Apparently many teachers discouraged their students from going because they considered the play too trivial to be worth the interruption it caused in the school schedule.

As in previous years, actors visited schools and classrooms, and there were several in-theatre press conferences. Also the post-performance question-answer session continued to be a regular feature of the theatre visits.

Soon after the opening of Room Service, the ICRC offered its adult audiences revivals of two earlier successes, The Fantasticks, and The Glass Menagerie. The Fantasticks played for only one or two nights in November but was brought back for similar brief stands in the spring and early summer. The Glass Menagerie was once again directed by Lonny Chapman and played for two weeks during the Christmas holidays. With a different cast from the 1967 production, Chapman fashioned a slightly different interpretation of the Williams play and earned mixed reviews from the press.

Another Williams play was offered to the general public in January. This was his "absurd" one-act, "The Gnadiges Fraulein," and it was directed by Jay Stevens. On the same bill were some original vaudeville-type skits also directed by Stevens. Most reviewers called the twin offering interesting but not exciting.

The third and final production at the theatre for the students was Jean Anouilh's version of the Greek tragedy Antigone, directed by Owen Dodson. It was well received both by critics and students. One reviewer called it the ICRC's best production in two seasons, and all generally agreed that it was smooth, well-directed and exciting theatre. It opened on February 13th.

On the same date the ICRC began an in-school tour of the fourth Project play, Ionesco's "The Bald Soprano." Directed by Abel Franco, the play was mounted to be able to travel to 65 high schools with varying types of auditorium facilities. The play was well received and several administrators in particular expressed relief over the fact that they

Los Angeles: The Third Year

During the summer of 1969 the key administrators of the Project in Los Angeles had a much better chance to prepare for the forthcoming season than they ever had before in spite of the fact that several financial matters were unresolved and interfered with other planning. The school's Play Selection Advisory Committee, working in cooperation with theatre personnel, had tentatively chosen a list of plays by the end of June, and there was considerably more time to prepare study packets for the season's first production, West Side Story, and for the other three plays, Room Service, Antigone, and "The Bald Soprano." Gass and Stern were assisted by a number of English and drama teachers in preparing the curriculum materials and in producing a radio broadcast tape about the theatre experience.

Meanwhile the ICCC booked in several theatrical programs during the summer and early fall (the most notable being the Negro Ensemble Company) and engaged Lonny Chapman as director for West Side Story. Rehearsals for that play began early in September, and, with a large number of new actors on the payroll for West Side Story, the ICCC suddenly found itself in an impossible financial bind. According to Jack Jackson, $12,000 was owed the Cultural Center by the schools from the previous May, but according to the Board of Education ICCC had been overpaid $50,000.

A meeting involving theatre, school, state and federal officials was held late in September to determine where the misunderstandings had arisen and how the flow of federal money could be facilitated. It was discovered that the problem stemmed from a contract which contained contradictory clauses and the participants at the meeting proceeded to find a way to legally award the ICCC the $12,000 it was due and arranged to revise the contract for the final year. (See the report of this meeting in Appendix D to Volume Three of this report.) In the meantime, the National Endowment advanced the company a sum large enough to pay for current actors' salaries.

During September Stern and Gass had established a Project representative in each participating high school and then brought these individuals together at a meeting where they discussed the West Side Story curriculum materials. The representatives were to hold similar meetings with the teachers in their respective schools.

The musical opened on October 6 and was well received by the press, by the students, and by the teachers. The singing, dancing, and acting all drew favorable comments, but the musical accompaniment was generally acknowledged to be barely adequate. According to ICCC officials, funds did not come through in time to hire musicians for adequate rehearsals. Nevertheless, the third Project season was under way and, according to most observers, happily so.

with blues singer Nellie Lutcher. On the program with Miss Lutcher was a short one-act by Langston Hughes, "Soul Gone Home," directed by Clarence Jackson.

The ICCC continued its apprentice-training program, held film festivals, open houses, dances and had an open forum series on various topics. It set up a separate corporation called the Inner City Institute which offered classes in all phases of the performing arts in a building close to the theatre which also housed additional rehearsal and office space, the Langston-Hughes Memorial Library and, temporarily at least, the scenery shop. An innovation in the spring which proved popular was a monthly "Talent Night," open to any who cared to audition for it with cash prizes and encouragement going to the winners. Late in the spring, the ICCC announced the formation of The Inner City Repertory Dance Company, a permanent modern dance group directed by Janet Collins and Donald McKayle which the ICCC hoped would become of major national importance. Also busy during the 1969-70 school year was a protest theatre group, The New World Theatre, directed by Jeanne Joe of the ICCC. The group had grown out of the theatre training classes.

In general, the third year of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project in Los Angeles was its smoothest, perhaps due in part to the fact that no one gave much serious thought to having the Project continue. Though both Stern and Jackson sought foundation support for a fourth year, school and theatre officials alike seemed content just to get through the final Project year with as little trouble as possible. Money was tight and the Los Angeles schools were facing so many crises that potential conflicts with the theatre were unimportant. From the point of view of ICCC officials, the Project had intruded on some of the center's primary goals, but it had also provided financial support and a demanding audience of youngsters on which to test the ICRC's artistic strength. Sometimes, when the artistry was uneven, school officials had second thoughts about their involvement in the Project, but individual students generally approved of the experience and the ICCC made a healthy inpact on their lives. As in the other two sites seniors were extended "alumni" privileges of reduced rates for future ICRC productions, and it is probable that in succeeding years some will continue to pursue their interest in theatre in general and their association with the Inner City group in particular.

Rhode Island: The Fourth Year

The summer of 1969 in Rhode Island found the schools and the theatre in a minor hassle over who would control the funds allocated by Governor Licht for Project Discovery. Barton Emmet felt they should be administered by Trinity Square, but school officials insisted that Project Discovery have a separate school coordinator. Since state funds were now involved, Don Gardner, who was the English Consultant in the State Department of Education and had been a key worker in the "Save Project Discovery" drive, was appointed project administrator. Gardner, in turn, appointed Barrie Young as his assistant, and Richard Cumming continued to be Trinity's Director of Educational Services.

didn't have to bus their students to the theatre.

Late in February the Project Coordinator initiated a teachers workshop series called "The Challenge of the Theatre," which met once a week for a period of eight weeks and featured guest speakers. The first speaker in the series was science fiction author and playwright Ray Bradbury. Others included a professor of theatre, a professional critic, a drama coach, and Viola Spolin, author of Improvisation for the Theatre.

In April, the Los Angeles Unified School District was faced with a teachers walk-out over the issue of insufficient state funds for education. By that time Antigone had completed its run, but "The Bald Soprano" was still travelling to schools and the company's tour was cut short. The schools did not get back into full operation until May 14th and by that time the "Soprano" cast had been disbanded.

However, the Western Opera Theatre, a touring company originally created as a branch of the San Francisco Opera, was performing at the Inner City Cultural Center in mid-May. Since it was equipped to travel to schools as well as large theatre buildings, arrangements were made to have the company perform at five city high schools and present from its repertory either Puccini's La Boheme or Menotti's The Medium. The Company provided its own curriculum materials, and following each performance there was a discussion period which allowed students the opportunity to quiz the performers about themselves or the work they had just performed.

Prior to the Western Opera Theatre's appearance on its stage, the ICRC had sponsored two other theatrical programs for the general public. One was "The Bald Soprano" coupled with a mine performance by Richmond Shepard. The second was an original drama titled The Alligators are Coming written by Thaddeus Vane and directed by Jay Stevens. It received mixed reviews in early May and was presented intermittently on the ICCC stage through June and into the summer, with the script continuing to be revised.

Throughout the 1969-70 season, the ICCC had a variety of other activities to entice the public--in particular, the minority groups. The famed Negro Ensemble Company of New York had opened its U.S. tour there in August, 1969, and returned for another engagement in the spring. Other theatre groups brought in included the already mentioned Western Opera Theatre, The Circus from San Francisco, El Teatro Campesino, the East-West Players, and a group from New York's Black Arts Theatre presenting a program of one-acts called A Black Quartet. Additional attractions included the Eleo Pomare Dance Company, a concert by pianist Don Shirley and actress Beah Richards, and an evening

Meanwhile Adrian Hall chose a theme for the coming season of plays: "The New American Drama." Of the five plays two would be world premieres, one was being reworked by its author for the Trinity production, and the other two were by established contemporary American authors.

The first production was to be Robert Lowell's Old Glory, three one-acts based on short stories by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville, loosely connected by the symbol of the American flag. The play had won the Obie (off-Broadway) Award for the best play of 1964-65.

Hall decided to make four of the season's five plays available to students at the RISD theatre, and he obtained permission to make extensive modifications in the auditorium. Even more seats were removed than had been for Macbeth and Billy Budd and the acting area was made into a huge triangular thrust-type stage.

Old Glory opened to a student audience on the morning of September 29. The participating school districts were paying $2.50 per student per play plus the costs of transportation; and, for Old Glory, a total of 18 daytime performances for students were scheduled. The play opened to the general public the following evening and received mixed reviews. Some of the critics faulted individual stories in the production and others were not sure they approved of the non-conventional thrust of Adrian Hall's recent work. Apparently some season subscribers agreed with these latter critics, for the subscription figures for the new season were significantly lower than they had been for 1968-69.

The curriculum packets that went out to the schools were less elaborate than they had been under the federal grant. A major item in most of them throughout the year was an interview with or a statement by the author. Also included were some bulletin board materials and lists of related books, films, and records that were available. Texts of the plays were not provided to students though copies of the Hawthorne short stories used in the Lowell play were included in the teacher's packet. Later in the year, teachers also received a copy of Famous American Plays of the 1940s in the portfolio for The Skin of Our Teeth.

On a Sunday afternoon in October, Trinity Square sponsored a New American Drama Forum which featured two of the season's authors, Robert Lowell and James Schevill, director Adrian Hall, and an English instructor at Rhode Island School of Design, Hugo Leckey. The authors talked about their plays and Hall and Leckey discussed the need for new developments in American theatre.

The second Trinity production, was William Goyen's House of Breath, Black/White. The play had had one prior production off-Broadway and Goyen was in residence at Trinity to make changes in the script for the Providence showing.

It was a memory play about two families in a small Texas town and several of the characters were represented by two performers, one black and one white. House of Breath opened in the small playhouse on November 4th and most of the newspaper reviewers found the production interesting and moving in some respects but flawed in others.

The third play of the season and the second one offered as part of the Project Discovery program was Wilson and the Promise Land. This was a new play and the author, Roland Van Zant, also remained in residence with the company during the rehearsals. The drama, which takes a critical view of Woodrow Wilson in particular and of Presidential quests for power in general, had its world premiere on December 9th and received excellent critical acclaim, both locally and nationally. Some reviewers questioned the historical validity of the playwright's theme, but almost all termed the production exciting and provocative and praised the acting and direction in particular. In addition to its adult showings it was presented at 15 student matinees.

Later in December Project Discovery once more offered students a series of Saturday theatre workshops. They functioned much as the ones during previous years had, and were again attended by 250 Rhode Island teenagers from all over the state. The program was so popular that a series of advanced workshops was offered in the spring.

The fourth play of the season was Thornton Wilder's The Skin of Our Teeth. Though the play is by no means conventional drama, it was welcomed by one local reviewer as a "play which will please rather than puzzle." Because the play has so many zany elements, Hall, his set designer, and his actors had a delightful time stamping it with their interpretation and the same reviewer called it "a good play...perfectly produced." Beginning in late January, it ran through February and played to 17 student audiences.

At about this time, it was decided that Barton Emmet, who had run up a longer tenure than any of his predecessors as Administrative Director, would leave Trinity Square at the end of the season. Mrs. Marion Simon assumed most of his responsibilities.

The campaign to find a site for the former ANTA theatre which Trinity had purchased was also renewed, and after possible locations in East Providence and in the downtown section of Providence were rejected, it was finally announced that the Board had chosen a site in Pawtucket, across from City Hall.

The final production of the year at RISD was the premiere of a play titled Lovecraft's Follies. Based loosely on the horror-fiction of Providence author H. P. Lovecraft, the play by Brown University Proffesor James Schevill ranged in its cast of characters from Tarzan to J. Robert Oppenheimer. It opened in March and received glowing reviews locally and nationally. Both Julius Novick in the New York Times and Henry Hewes in The Saturday Review began their comments with high praise for the Trinity Square Company in general and then went on to extoll the lively production of Schevill's play in particular. Their enthusiasm was shared by students who attended 13 morning and matinee performances.

In the spring Trinity again offered participating Project Discovery schools a new edition of "Rhode Show." Actually there were two programs available. One, titled "The Faces of War," explored that theme from the time of the Greeks to the present through dramatic readings and song. The other consisted of readings from Spoon River Anthology by Trinity actor Timothy Taylor and his actress wife, Maggie Peach. The Spoon River program was more popular than the one on war and the Taylors gave 61 performances most of which were followed by informal talk sessions with the students. On a number of occasions the readings plus the discussions generated so much interest that students wrote their own poetic epitaphs for Spoon River citizens Master's had not included in his work. And some of the poems were so good that the Taylors occasionally used one or two in subsequent performances of their program.

Some other original student writing was included in an additional spring touring program called "Contemporary Salad." "Salad" grew out of the advanced acting workshops and was a quick survey of contemporary poetry from 1900 to 1970 presented by two students, Cynthia Palmer and Glen O'Malley. Coached by Trinity actor Ronald Frazier, the two youngsters performed for 15 student audiences.

Still another program offered the schools in May was a lecture-performance by Henry Butler entitled "Who Needs the Arts?" As in previous year's Butler's program was well received in the 15 schools he visited.

Meanwhile, the theatre company itself received further national recognition when it was presented the Margo Jones Award. Margo Jones was a pioneer in regional theatre and the $500 memorial award is given each year to that company which has done the most to promote the American theatre. In addition, the company was invited to bring its production of Wilson and the Promise Land to New York for a two week showing at the ANTA theatre. The production received excellent notices in the press, but extremely poor attendance forced the producers to cancel the run after only one week. This experience cut into some of the company's own funds and caused the Board to reconsider and eventually cancel a projected summer tour to Israel and to Edinburgh where Trinity Square had again been invited to participate in the famed Edinburgh Festival.

It is perhaps worth noting that in 1969-70 more members of the theatre company were working directly with students than ever before. The Taylors inspired several young people to write poetry; other actors helped to direct school or college productions, while still others were deeply involved in the Saturday workshops. A few members of the Trinity Players became instructors in theatre arts during the summer months, and Richard Cumming was appointed Director of the Governor's School, a summer arts program for gifted high school students.

But the most significant thing about the fourth Project Discovery season, according to Don Gardner, was that it happened at all. Twenty public and 13 independent schools brought their students to the theatre and contributed over $84,000 in seat money. There were a number of complaints by teachers and administrators that the season of plays was too innovative to provide a balanced educational program, but they participated nonetheless. Some schools may decide not to participate next year unless more established playwrights are represented, but eight school systems have already appropriated funds for a fifth Project Discovery season and Governor Licht has again set aside $40,000 from his contingency fund to provide curricular support. So it seems almost certain that there will be a fifth Project Discovery season during the 1970-71 school year.

New Orleans: The Fourth Year

With its federal funding gone, the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project in New Orleans fizzled out after three years of struggle. Unlike Rhode Island, there was in New Orleans, no massive, community-wide effort to save the Project. Part of the fault undoubtedly lay in the fact that too many things had been tried at one time--the creation of a professional theatre where none had existed for some 40 years and the simultaneous creation of an educational program for some 30,000 to 40,000 students.

Even with the re-organization of the theatre board under the chairmanship of a determined promoter of good causes, Mrs. Muriel Bultman Francis, the existing theatre company could not survive. In June of 1969 after announcing elaborate plans for the fourth season, Stuart Vaughan resigned--talking of greater opportunities for artistic freedom in New York. The assistant director, David Scanlan was appointed to succeed him while the board, business office, T 'n Ts, and Women's Organization worked hard on fund raising efforts and subscription drives. In early September, while he was in New York to cast for plays, it became clear that money was not to be forthcoming, and Scanlan resigned to accept an offer at Rutgers University. At about the same time, negotiations to purchase or lease the Civic for the fourth season broke down, and Mrs. Francis relunctantly announced the closing of Repertory Theatre, New Orleans. She explained that it was "due to the refusal of one of the owners, Maurice Grundy, to sign a lease which the other two owners, Lange Allen and Clovis Viguerie, and I, as lessee, have already signed."

Grundy maintained that he could not lease the Civic Theatre to the Repertory Theatre for the fourth season because he had a contractual obligation to a touring company of Man of La Mancha to use the Civic in December and he couldn't break his word.

Then, on September 15, only a few days after the papers broke the story of the theatre's demise, Mrs. Francis told a reporter of the Times-Picayune:

> Dammit, we're going into this fourth season regardless! We'll find a place to put on the shows if I have to pitch a tent in a parking lot. My phone hasn't stopped ringing all day long. People, I don't even know, wanting to find out if the Rep can be saved. Well, it's saved as far as I'm concerned. If this thing goes down the drain, it will do so with my last nickel.

The next day, Mayor Victor Schiro proclaimed special "Rally for Rep" days and new hope flickered for professional theatre in New Orleans.

After Scanlan's resignation, Mrs. Francis and Ryan had sought help from writer-actress-director June Havoc who had appeared with the Repertory Theatre during its first season. Late in September she agreed to star in and direct two shows, Three-Penny Opera and Streetcar Named Desire and the board redoubled its fund-raising efforts while searching frantically for a suitable theatre. The hunt ended on October 21st with the signing of a five year lease for a building formerly known at different times as the Motion Picture Advertising Building and Temple Sinai. Extensive remodeling on the building resulted in an intimate theatre with a thrust-type stage.

"We're calling this 'the new Rep' because we are," Ryan said. "While not starting over completely from scratch, we are moving in such different ways that we are a totally new enterprise. This is not the Repertory that was solely academic in direction nor the theatre with the squeaky seats. The beautiful thing is this theatre--the New Rep--was born of the desire and demand of the people of this area."

With the aid of a National Endowment grant, the New Rep's season opened March 20th, 1970, with Three-Penny Opera, which was described as "an exciting, throbbing and living piece of theatre" by critic James A. Perry of the States-Item. That production was followed by Luv by Murray Schisgal, which Perry termed a "crunchy confection." In May the New Rep presented The Women by Clare Boothe featuring actress Julie Harris. The season continued through August 2nd with Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire and the popular musical, The Fantasticks by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt. While The Women and The Fantasticks were generally well received by the critics as good, professional theatre, Streetcar was awarded rave notices as the season's most outstanding production.

The New Repertory Theatre owes its existence to the one established by Vaughan for the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, but there is little resemblance to its parent company. Even Ryan was gone from the scene by early summer, and a search was underway for a dynamic new general manager.

The only tangible remnant of the Project in the New Orleans schools is a new Office of Cultural Resources for the Orleans Public School System. Shirley Trusty was appointed supervisor of the office and given a small budget with which to coordinate information on any available cultural activities and publicize it in the schools. Miss Trusty did not use the Repertory Theatre, since its season opened late in March. (However, the company did offer a touring show to the schools during the last weeks of the school year and was booked by some 24 schools. Possibly because of remembered bad feelings, Ryan chose not to go through Miss Trusty's office in booking the school program.)

During the summer of 1970, Miss Trusty hired the theatre's touring unit to perform for about 1,500 junior high students involved in a six weeks program entitled Supportive Educational Enrichment and funded by Title I. She also used 10 other performing arts forms within her budget of $20,000 for cultural activities under the specially-funded program which in total, involved more than 5,000 students in 36 schools.

In August, Miss Trusty's office was awarded $10,000 under Title I to use during the 1970-71 school year in developing pilot programs in the arts for the disadvantaged. With part of this money, she designated one elementary school to receive a variety of art experiences through the year; and with the remainder she hired two professional dancers to be artists-in-residence for three weeks in a junior high school. The professionals then would also continue working through the year with students who showed special interest in dance.

An additional service Miss Trusty planned for the fall was a package of four performing arts programs to offer junior and senior high schools. The schools could buy the package as an assembly program series. Miss Trusty has expressed hope of working with the New Repertory Theatre again during the school year, but everything is uncertain. "Who knows," she said in a recent conversation, "There may not even be a theatre come September or October. Basically, we're about where we were last year. The theatre is fighting for its very existence."

Conclusion

In August, 1970 CEMREL completed its final report on the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, and as far as the federal government is concerned, it is once again no longer deeply involved in "show business." However, in the future when theatre historians refer to large scale, federal support of regional professional theatres, they will have two instances of such activity to discuss, and, we should hope, the more recent one should be no less interesting to study than the earlier Federal Theatre Project.

PART TWO

The reception of the project in the three sites

REPORT OF RESULTS OF THE END-OF-THE PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

James Hoetker

During the last few weeks of the federally-funded life of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project in each of its three sites, a lengthy "end-of-the-Project" questionnaire was distributed to samples of students, English teachers, and high school principals and assistant principals. The questionnaire responses of these participants in the Project give us perhaps our best objective evidence upon which to base judgments about how the Project was received in each site by those who were most affected by it. The questionnaire responses reveal large and consistent differences between the sites in the judgments made by participants upon such things as its impact upon the schools, its educational value, the artistic quality of the productions, and the desirability of a continuation of the Project.

The differences between sites revealed by an examination of the questionnaire responses were, moreover, precisely those which we would have predicted on the basis of the reactions collected in the present volume and on the basis of our personal experiences with the Project between the autumn of 1966 and the present. Time after time, as we examined the printouts of the questionnaire data, we found ourselves saying things like, "Exactly. That's just the way it was!" The inescapable conclusion from the questionnaire responses and from the mass of reactions reprinted in the remainder of the present volume, is that, for a number of reasons which are explored in the several volumes which make up this report, the Project was not equally successful in its three locations.

The analysis of the "end-of-the-Project" questionnaire responses precedes the sections of quoted reactions from participants and observers of the Project in the hopes that it will serve to orient the reader and to give him an overview of the issues which affected the reception given the Project in Rhode Island, New Orleans, and Los Angeles; so that with the grounding provided by this chapter, he will be able more easily to see how the people, plays, procedures, and processes dealt with in the chapters that follow helped to determine the fortunes of the Project in each site.

Description of the Questionnaires

There were separate questionnaire forms for students, teachers, and school administrators, with the forms for each category of respondents being identical for all the sites, except for such small details as that of referring to "Project Discovery" rather than to the "Theatre Project" on the Rhode Island questionnaires. The administrator questionnaire was much shorter than that given to the other groups, and it contained only items dealing with the quality of the Project and general impressions of its impact on the schools. The teacher questionnaire, in addition, contained items which asked specifically about the impact of the Project upon particular sorts of students and for information about specific classroom activities undertaken in connection with the Project. The student questionnaire, in addition to the items it shared with the teacher and administrator questionnaires, contained 12 items repeated from a questionnaire administered to a comparable sample of students two years earlier, which asked for information about the student's preferences and leisure activities.

In the present chapter, we will report the results of our analyses of only those items dealing with the quality of the Project and its impact upon the schools. The analyses of the other sorts of questions will be reported in the volume of quantitative studies, in which context they will serve to illumine some of the issues dealt with in those studies.

Explanation of the Sampling Design

In Rhode Island and New Orleans, where students from grades 10, 11, and 12 were participating in the Project, our sampling plan called for a stratification of the sample of English classes by grade, socioeconomic status, and ability level, and for the random selection of two classes at each combination of levels of these factors. Using information provided by the schools, three socioeconomic levels of schools were identified. Schools within each of these levels were randomly chosen, and school officials were asked to identify English classes at three levels of ability. Then, in each of the schools, English classes at each ability level at each of the three grades were chosen at random. This procedure would have given us 3 x 3 x 3 = 27 combinations of the three factors, and a total of 54 English classes in the sample. It was not possible to fill quite all the cells because, due to a number of local customs, English classes at all of the combinations of levels of the factors did not exist.

In Los Angeles, at the time the questionnaire was administered, only students from the twelfth grade were participating in the Project. In order to obtain a sample of students comparable in size to the samples in the other two sites, we planned to administer the questionnaire to students in six English classes at each of the nine combinations of levels of socioeconomic status and ability level. Unfortunately, after we had obtained responses from a few classes at each combination of levels, the Los Angeles schools were disrupted by a prolonged teachers' strike, and we had to discontinue our data collection. The student sample we obtained in Los Angeles, therefore, had the characteristics we desired, but was somewhat smaller than we had wanted.

The sampling design for the three sites, with the grade level factor omitted, is summarized in Figure 1, which follows. The cell entries represent the number of classes to which the questionnaire was actually administered.

Insert Figure 1 Here

The teacher sample consisted simply of the English teachers of the classes to whom the student questionnaire was administered. The administrator or principal questionnaire was given to the principal or assistant principal of each of the schools in which we administered the student questionnaire, but this gave us a very small number of administrator responses, so we continued to call upon principals in a random order until we had obtained approximately a 50% sample of the school administrators in each site.

By these procedures, we obtained responses from a total of 44 classes or 950 students in Rhode Island, 49 classes or 1,216 students in New Orleans, and 35 classes or 752 students in Los Angeles. These numbers of students represent roughly 4% of the total population of participating students in Rhode Island and Los Angeles and roughly 3% of the participating students in New Orleans.

The number of teacher respondents was 44 in Rhode Island, 47 in New Orleans, and 35 in Los Angeles. If we figure that each English teacher has five classes of approximately 30 students, and that all those students participate in the Project, the 44 Rhode Island teachers would teach about 6,600 or 26% of the 25,000 participating Rhode Island students, the 47 New Orleans teachers would teach 7,050 or 18% of the 40,000 participating New Orleans students, and the 35 Los Angeles teachers would teach 5,250 or 29% of the 18,000 participating Los Angeles students. (The accuracy of these assumptions cannot be determined from data available to us, but it seems clear that the teacher sample included the teachers of a sizeable fraction of the participating students.)

The administrator questionnaire was completed by 27 principals or assistant principals in Rhode Island, 27 in New Orleans, and 92 in Los Angeles.

Administration of the Questionnaire

A few of the administrator questionnaires were mailed following a telephone conversation, but student and teacher questionnaires were taken to the schools by a member of the CEMREL staff who supervised the completion of the questionnaire and collected the completed instruments. The only exception to this procedure was in a school where scheduling difficulties required the English department chairman to supervise the administration of some of the questionnaires and to mail the completed instruments.

FIGURE 1. Sampling Design for the
Student Population in Rhode Island, New Orleans and Los Angeles
(Cell Entries are Numbers of Classes of Respondents)

RHODE ISLAND

		Socioeconomic Status		
		Low	Moderate	High
Ability Level	Low	5	4	5
	Med.	6	3	6
	High	6	5	4

NEW ORLEANS

		Socioeconomic Status		
		Low	Moderate	High
Ability Level	Low	5	5	6
	Med.	5	6	5
	High	5	6	6

LOS ANGELES

		Socioeconomic Status		
		Low	Moderate	High
Ability Level	Low	4	4	4
	Med.	4	5	4
	High	4	3	3

A Note on the Presentation of Results

The comparisons between groups and between sites that are presented in the following pages are made in terms of percentages of respondents giving particular replies. No statistical analyses are referred to, on the grounds that (1) they would make the report difficult for some readers and (2) they are unnecessary because the differences which exist are so large as to be of obvious practical importance, so the question of statistical significance is a trivial one. (With samples as large as those involved here, differences of even a few percentage points attain statistical significance; and, besides, what is often of interest in the comparisons is the absolute level of agreement or disagreement with particular propositions.)

Sentiment Toward Continuation of the Project

Two items that were common to all forms of the questionnaire are particularly valuable as indicators of differences in responses to the Project between sites and between groups in each of the sites. The first of these simply asked the respondent whether he thought the Project should be continued or not, after the end of its third year. The percentage of each group in each site who answered this question "yes" is given in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Percentage of Respondents

Saying that the Project Should be Continued

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Students	98.5	97.1	91.1
Teachers	97.7	89.1	68.6
Principals	96.2	85.2	54.3

More than nine out of ten students expressed the desire for the Project to continue beyond the end of its third year, and, in Rhode Island, both English teachers and principals, looking at the Project from their different perspectives, agreed. Slightly fewer teachers and principals in New Orleans agreed. Support for continuation of the Project from teachers and principals was much less in evidence in Los Angeles, though a majority even of the principals said they would like to see the Project continued.

The next question asked the respondents was whether they would like to see the Project continued "even if it must be supported by local school funds." As might be expected, the percentage of "yes" answers dropped. (Table 2)

TABLE 2. Percentage of Respondents Saying the Project Should be Continued With Local School Funds

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Students	90.6	82.5	59.4
Teachers	95.3	66.8	37.1
Principals	88.2	55.6	30.4

The differences in enthusiasm for the Project that are revealed here are practically as well as statistically significant. In Rhode Island, the Project did continue with the help of school appropriations after the Federal funding was withdrawn; the Project in New Orleans and in Los Angeles ceased to exist as soon as the Federal funds ran out.

Evaluation of the Project's Value

That the enthusiasm of participants for the Project was related to their judgment of both its artistic quality and educational efficacy is quite clear, for, on almost every possible measure, Rhode Island ranked first, New Orleans second, and Los Angeles third, the differences being not only large but relatively constant. For example, one item common to all the student and teacher questionnaires asked the respondent to choose the one statement from a set of five which came closest to his own opinion of the Project.

The five statements and the percentages of each group choosing each statement are given in Table 3.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

To look at the data in Table 3 in a slightly different way, 83% of Rhode Island students chose one of the two most favorable statements, while only 46% of the Los Angeles students made the same choices; 86% of Rhode Island teachers chose the most favorable statements, but only 23% of Los Angeles teachers chose those statements. At the other extreme, about two per cent of the teachers in both Rhode Island and New Orleans chose the two least favorable statements, while fully 34% of the Los Angeles teachers made these choices.

Responses to Forty Statements About the Project

Even more informative, however, than the responses to these rather global questions were the responses to specific statements about various aspects of the Project. There were forty of these statements

TABLE 3. Responses of Students and Teachers in

Each Site to Statements About the Value of the Project

	Percent agreeing with each statement					
	Students			Teachers		
Text of Statement	R.I.	N.O.	L.A.	R.I.	N.O.	L.A.
1. Nothing the schools could have done would have been so good for the students and the community as Project Discovery has been.*	35.5	29.7	9.3	29.5	15.2	0
2. Project Discovery is one of the better things that the schools around here have done.	47.2	42.4	37.0	56.8	45.7	22.8
3. For the most part, Project Discovery has been worthwhile.	14.4	20.8	34.8	11.4	37.0	37.1
4. Project Discovery has been all right, but it would have been better to spend the money on more important subjects or on books and equipment.	1.5	4.8	14.6	0	2.2	20.0
5. Project Discovery has been a waste of time and money.	1.4	2.2	4.3	2.3	0	14.3

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*The wording here is that of the Rhode Island questionnaires; on the New Orleans and Los Angeles questionnaires, the phrase "Theatre Project" was used in place of "Project Discovery" on the student and teacher questionnaires and ten fewer on the principal questionnaires; the statements representing opinions and suggestions for improvement which had come up over and over during the course of the Project in interviews, correspondence, and conversations. Some of the statements praise elements of the Project, some are critical or even condemnatory, and others are judgmentally neutral suggestions or observations. We were interested in determining the amount of agreement or disagreement the statements would elicit from each group of respondents in each location.

The forty statements appear as item 17 on the student questionnaire, item 13 on the teacher questionnaire, and item 1 on the administrator questionnaire. The reader may, at this point, wish to look over the items before reading the report of the respondents' reactions to them. It will be noted that a respondent had the three options of agreeing with a statement, disagreeing with it, or choosing to express no opinion. In the summary tables that follow, only percentages of agreement and disagreement are reported.

For reporting purposes, the forty statements can be grouped into three categories of unequal sizes. The first and largest category consists of statements concerned with educational aspects of the Project; the second of statements concerned with artistic aspects of the Project; and the third of statements concerned with administrative and procedural details. Within the first and third of these categories there are several logical subcategories.

Educational Aspects of the Project

The first subcategory here consists of seven statements having to do with student responses to the theatre experience itself. Statement 12 read:

> Going to the theatre was an exciting experience for most students.

Among students, agreement with the statement was higher in Rhode Island and New Orleans than in Los Angeles, but even in the latter site a majority of students agreed.

STUDENTS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	75.1	71.1	53.1
Disagree	9.5	14.0	21.9

The same pattern held for teachers, though with the differences between sites being more pronounced.

TEACHERS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	88.6	76.6	51.4
Disagree	4.5	6.4	31.4

New Orleans principals, due to a printing error, did not have the chance to respond to this statement (or to statement 11), but the differences between principals in the other two sites were pronounced.

PRINCIPALS:	Rhode Island	Los Angeles
Agree	92.6	46.7
Disagree	3.7	40.2

Although each group of respondents made its judgments of student "excitement" on different evidence and from different viewpoints, it seems clear that, regardless of whether student, teacher, or principal estimates are closest to the truth, each group in Los Angeles made a lower estimate than the corresponding group in the other sites.

Statement 19 read:

> The plays should not be so intellectual that large numbers of students are bored or bewildered.

It seemed likely that only the rare elitist would disagree with this statement if he construed it as a theoretical proposition, so we took agreement with the statement to imply a criticism of the plays actually presented. About 50% of the students in all three sites agreed with the statement and about 30% disagreed, with the percentage of disagreement being slightly higher in Rhode Island than in the other two sites. Teacher agreement with the statement was higher in New Orleans (68.1%) than in Rhode Island (61.4%) or Los Angeles (51.4%). This would seem to mean that, although a majority of both teachers and students in all sites had some criticism of the level of sophistication of the chosen plays, Los Angeles teachers were somewhat less critical of play selection than teachers in the other sites. Los Angeles principals, on the contrary, were much more critical than their counterparts:

PRINCIPALS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	40.7	51.9	75.0
Disagree	51.9	29.6	14.0

This divergence in judgment between groups of respondents in Los Angeles will be found quite often, with the principals being more negative than Los Angeles students and teachers and much more negative than principals in the other two sites. Undoubtedly, the fact that the school principals in Los Angeles were never convinced of the worth of the Project is of the greatest importance, and we believe that the administrative complexity and inconvenience of the Project in Los Angeles--which is explained in detail elsewhere in this report--does much to account for the principals being especially critical of the Project, while the artistic unevenness of the Los Angeles productions accounts for the generally lower level of enthusiasm for the Project among Los Angeles respondents generally.

Statement 1 read:

> Most of the plays were not very closely related to the interests of teen-agers.

Differences between students and teachers in the three sites were very small, with about 25% of each group in each location agreeing that the plays selected for the Project were not very relevant and about 55% disagreeing. The judgments of the principals on this point, however, differed markedly, as in the following table.

PRINCIPALS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	7.4	33.3	48.9
Disagree	77.8	48.1	33.7

If disagreement with the statement is taken as a vote of confidence in the appropriateness of the plays done for the students, and agreement is taken as a criticism, it is clear that Rhode Island principals were pleased with what was done and Los Angeles principals quite displeased.

Statement 35 again touched on the problem of relevancy to student interests:

> More of the plays should deal with modern problems.

And we took agreement with this as implicit criticism of some of the plays actually presented. A large majority of students in all three sites agreed with this statement, suggesting they would have been even more enthusiastic about plays more closely related to their direct concerns.

STUDENTS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	60.7	69.1	59.2
Disagree	17.5	12.9	14.8

But, as already reported, only about a quarter of the students agreed (Statement 1), that "most of the plays were not very closely related to the interests of teenagers," so the suggestion is that the students found most of the plays relevant to them, and were critical only of the fact that not all of the plays dealt with issues in which they were themselves interested. The position taken by the teachers on this point were very similar to that taken by the students, with more than half the teachers in each site agreeing there should be more plays about "modern problems" and about a quarter disagreeing.

Among the principals, however, the differences between sites were pronounced:

PRINCIPALS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	29.6	22.6	53.4
Disagree	51.9	33.3	25.0

The Los Angeles principals, in this case, resemble the students and teachers more than do the principals in the other two sites. Disagreement by a majority of principals in New Orleans and Rhode Island with both this statement and Statement 1 would suggest principal satisfaction with the mix of "classic" and "relevant" plays in those two sites, while the agreement of about half the principals in Los Angeles with both statements would suggest, rather paradoxically, that many Los Angeles principals found many of the plays irrelevant to students but disapproved of producing more relevant plays. Perhaps, however, the responses may be interpreted as artifactual, and due to the tendency of a certain number of Los Angeles principals to choose the most critical response to all statements about the Project. This interpretation would be in line with other evidence we have gathered, and it would help to explain other seeming contradictions in the responses reported below.

Statement 20, which was not included on the principal questionnaire, said:

> There should be more action in the plays, since that is what young people like to see.

The responses to this statement must be interpreted in the light of the productions actually done in the three sites. Adrian Hall's shows, especially the later ones for the Project, were filled with movement, violence, and spectacular special effects. The shows Stuart Vaughan did in New Orleans were, on the other hand, relatively static and sedate. The shows done by a variety of directors in Los Angeles ranged through the spectrum, with the amount of "action" having little to do with the overall quality of the production. Considering that the three groups of students had had experience with three very different theatres, they responded very similarly, with the variations being in the expected directions.

STUDENTS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	40.8	57.1	47.1
Disagree	34.7	23.3	25.9

The teachers, between the locations, diverged a bit more, with the New Orleans teachers, especially, tending to agree that more action would be desirable, and the Rhode Island and Los Angeles teachers tending to agree that more would not be desirable.

TEACHERS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	25.0	47.8	34.3
Disagree	52.3	34.0	45.7

The second subcategory of statements dealing with the educational aspects of the Project contains statements that touch upon estimates of what students learned from the Project or upon learnings which transferred from the theatre to the classroom. Statement 24 read:

> Attending the theatre has made students think more clearly about some of their own problems and the problems of the modern world.

There are two apparent interacting tendencies in the responses, complicated by the reluctance of the Los Angeles principals to say anything good about the Project. The first of these is that the teachers (in all three sites) and the principals (except in Los Angeles) agreed more frequently with the statement than the students. The second is that the respondents in Los Angeles less frequently agreed with the statement than respondents in the other sites. Still, it is important to note that--with the exception of the Los Angeles principals, many of whom chose the "no opinion" option--an absolute majority of the respondents in all the groups agreed that the theatre Project had the effect of making students think more deeply about themselves and the world around them. The percentages of agreement and disagreement for all the groups in all the sites are summarized below.

	STUDENTS			TEACHERS			PRINCIPALS		
	RI	NO	LA	RI	NO	LA	RI	NO	LA
Agree	57.2	55.9	46.0	70.5	70.2	51.4	74.1	63.0	39.1
Disagree	14.8	18.6	19.0	9.1	4.3	25.7	7.4	25.9	21.7

The next two statements dealt with the transfer from the theatre experience to the English classroom. Statement 7 (to which principals were not asked to respond) read:

> Going to the plays helped to make the study of literature more interesting.

And statement 39 read:

> After seeing the plays put on by the Theatre Project (Project Discovery), students are much more likely to enjoy reading plays.

A majority of students and teachers responded favorably ("agree") to both these statements, and a majority of principals in all three sites also agreed with the second statement of the pair. In all cases, about ten per cent more of the respondents agreed in Rhode Island than in New Orleans, and about 12% more agreed in New Orleans than in Los Angeles. But the between-site differences in this case seem less significant than the fact that all groups in all three sites agreed that the Project was successfully attaining the very important objective of making the students' study of literature easier and more interesting.

Statements 10 and 29 had to do with the learning of appropriate behavior patterns as a result of participation in the Theatre Project. The two items read as follows:

> Students learned how to behave more maturely from their experience of going to the theatre;
>
> Student audiences have learned to behave more appropriately in the theatre as the Project has gone on.

Students, teachers, and principals in Los Angeles agreed less often with both these statements than did their counterparts in the other two sites and the differences were striking. In all three sites, there was (except in the case of the Los Angeles principals) greater agreement that students had learned to behave appropriately in the theatre (29) than that they had generally learned "to behave more maturely"(10).

Taking the general statement (10) first, about half of the students in Rhode Island (46.3%) and New Orleans (52.4%) agreed that students had learned to behave more maturely due to their theatre experience, while only 28.2 of Los Angeles students agreed this was the case and almost half (46.7%) disagreed. As shown in the table below, teachers in all three sites were more apt than students to agree with the statement, but the same large difference between Los Angeles and the other two sites is present.

TEACHERS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	59.1	57.4	42.9
Disagree	20.5	17.0	42.9

In Rhode Island and New Orleans, as shown in the next table, the school principals were most willing of all to testify that the theatre Project had taught students to behave more maturely, but not so the Los Angeles principals, who agreed with the statement half as often as principals in the other sites.

PRINCIPALS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	74.1	70.4	35.9
Disagree	11.1	18.5	43.5

The pattern of differences between groups and between sites is much the same in respect to the matter of student deportment within the theatre audience itself. More than 70% of Rhode Island and New Orleans students agreed; only 42% of Los Angeles students agreed. Eighty per cent of Rhode Island teachers and 70% of New Orleans teachers agreed, but only 48.6% of Los Angeles teachers agreed. Most strikingly, more than 70% of Rhode Island and New Orleans principals agreed with the statement, while only 32.6% of Los Angeles principals agreed with it.

Obviously, something was different about the experience in Los Angeles. According to the testimony reported here, the Project in Rhode Island and New Orleans must be judged successful in teaching students to behave appropriately in the theatre and in influencing in a desirable direction their general patterns of behavior. In Los Angeles, even the first and more modest of these objectives was attained to a much lesser extent. These discrepancies are, undoubtedly, functions of the many differences between the three sites--differences in administrative procedures, differences in the characteristics of the student populations served by the Project, differences in the artistic quality of the productions, and differences in the social contexts in which the Projects operated. All these things are discussed in detail elsewhere in this report, and, as noted earlier, we are attempting here only to point out patterns of contrasts between the sites and within the sites so as to assist the reader in his interpretation of the facts and opinions presented later.

Two related items, to move on, had to do with the students' affective responses to actors in the theatre company helping to motivate greater involvement with drama as an art form. Statement 26 (which was not given to administrators) read:

> Students who become fans of particular actors and actresses also become more interested in the theatre and in drama.

Statement 33 read:

> The chance to meet with the actors has done a great deal to make students respect the theatre.

More than 75% of the students in all sites agreed that becoming a fan makes one more interested in drama. More than 80% of the teachers in Rhode Island and New Orleans and 57% of the teachers in Los Angeles also agreed. On the question of whether meeting actors increases respect for drama, 60% of the Rhode Island and New Orleans students and 51% of the Los Angeles students agreed. Teacher and principal responses, however, differed markedly between the sites.

The teachers responded as follows:

TEACHERS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	68.2	51.1	22.9
Disagree	9.1	6.4	17.1

And the principals responded in this way:

PRINCIPALS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	66.7	55.6	41.3
Disagree	7.4	18.5	14.1

The explanations here are probably to be made in terms of the number of opportunities provided in the three Projects for actor-student contacts to take place. Note that 60% of the teachers in Los Angeles chose the "no opinion" option, which probably is simply a reflection of the fact that in the Los Angeles Project, there was little provision for students to meet actors in the schools and little opportunity for students to run across them informally in the community.

The final statement in this subcategory (40) gave respondents another chance to make a negative verdict on the impact of the theatre experience upon students. It read:

> Most students would just as soon see a movie version of a play as to see it "live" in the theatre.

Agreement with this statement was taken to signify that the respondent thought that the theatre Project had not succeeded in convincing students that theatre was a unique and special art, rather than just a technically inferior competitor with Cinemascope. Although there were between-site differences in the (by now) expected direction, what was most notable about responses to this statement was the perhaps unrealistically high percentage of disagreement with the statement in all the sites. Among students, 63.2% in Rhode Island, 50.7% in New Orleans, and 33.8% in Los Angeles chose the response indicating that students would sometimes prefer a stage play over a movie. Among the teachers, 65.9% in Rhode Island, 34% in New Orleans, and 31.4% in Los Angeles made the same response. Among principals, the percentages disagreeing were 66.7% for Rhode Island, 33.3% for New Orleans, and 42.4% for Los Angeles. Since only about 3% of Americans attend theatre with any regularity, even the lowest of these estimates seems to testify to the success of the Project. On the available evidence, however, most young people who patronize the resident companies after graduation from high school are full-time university students who might have been expected to attend the theatre whether or not there had been a Theatre Project.

But if the respondents are accurate in their estimates that relatively large numbers of students have developed a preference for live theatre under certain conditons, perhaps a delayed effect may be anticipated, with working class students beginning to attend the theatre in the future when their salaries rise to the point where such attendance is possible.

The third subcategory of statements relating to educational aspects of the Project contained two statements having to do with changes in the classroom behavior of English teachers as a result of participation in the Project. The first of these, Statement 31, read:

> Some English teachers started running more interesting classes as a result of the Theatre Project.

Our experience with such questions would have led us to predict a very high percentage of negative responses from teachers and principals, simply because to agree would be to imply that oneself and one's colleagues had been running dull classes previously. What happened, though, was that most of the adult respondents chose the "no opinion" option rather than disagreeing. Only 17.2% of Los Angeles teachers, for example either agreed or disagreed. Something like 50% of the principals in all three sites and teachers in the other three sites did commit themselves, however, and about 60% of students expressed an opinion. In these circumstances, the percentage of respondents who agreed that some teachers had, due to the Project, begun to conduct more interesting classes was surprisingly high--from 25% to 40% for all groups except the Los Angeles teachers. (In Los Angeles, because students at a different grade level took part in the Project each year, teachers typically were involved with the Project for a single year, rather than for three years as in the other sites. This in itself may serve to explain why only 8.6% of the Los Angeles teachers agreed with the statement.)

The statement 37 read:

> English teachers have learned new teaching methods from their involvement with the Theatre Project.

This is a much less threatening sort of statement than the preceding one, and larger percentages of teachers and principals agreed or disagreed with it. Fewer students either agreed or disagreed, however, probably on the grounds they were not in a position to make the comparative judgments called for. One might reasonably have expected agreement with this statement to vary with the intensity of the in-service training efforts that accompanied the Project in each site. Great stress was laid upon such training in New Orleans throughout the Project, and special emphasis was put upon innovative instructional methods appropriate to teaching about theatre. In-service training in Rhode Island was much less intensive and more of a generally informative nature. In-service training in Los Angeles was well-structured and extensive, but, unavoidably, any particular teacher was likely to be involved in very few of the sessions.

The results, as it turned out, were just about what might have been predicted on the basis of this information. Of New Orleans teachers, 72.3% agreed that teachers had learned new methods, while only 38.6% in Rhode Island and 20.0% in Los Angeles agreed. 40.7% of New Orleans principals judged that English teachers had learned new methods, while 29.6% in Rhode Island and 32.6% in Los Angeles so judged. Of the students who did express an opinion, more agreed in New Orleans than in the other sites, but, unlike the adults, more students in all sites disagreed than agreed, as in the following table:

STUDENTS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	18.4	20.5	13.7
Disagree	32.2	27.8	37.2

If even the most pessimistic of these estimates is correct, and even if every "no opinion" response were interpreted to mean that teachers did not learn new methods, the Project could be said to have had a remarkable impact upon teacher behavior, for there is nothing in education more difficult than getting teachers to do something recognizably new.

The next subcategory contained a group of statements having to do with what might be called the curricular aspects of the Theatre Project. The first pair of these statements, numbers 5 and 38, were these:

> Students should just go to the plays and enjoy them; the plays should not become part of the school curriculum;
>
> The plays that are presented in the theatre should be the same ones that students normally study in their English classes.

We had anticipated that we might find, in responses to the first of these questions, especially, a divergence between the students on one hand and the adults on the other, with students preferring just to see the plays and enjoy them and the adults stressing the relating of the plays to the English curriculum. This is not what we found at all. Agreement with the idea that the plays should not be related to the curriculum was low in all sites (ranging from 12.0% to 33.3%), and the relationship between groups was different in each site. In Rhode Island, about 20% of all three groups agreed and about 70% of all groups disagreed. In New Orleans, 22.4% of students, 12.7% of teachers, and 33.3% of principals agreed, with almost everyone expressing an opinion. In Los Angeles, 30.1% of students agreed the plays should not be part of the curriculum, but only 4.3% of teachers and 12.0% of principals agreed.

Statement 5 says that the plays performed should become part of the curriculum; statement 38 says that the plays already in the curriculum should be the ones that are performed. Rather surprisingly, it was the students who most frequently agreed the the latter statement--about 35%

in each of the sites agreeing and 45% disagreeing. Both teachers and principals disagreed at least twice as often as they agreed with the statement--agreement ranging from only 14.8% for principals in New Orleans to 29.6% for principals in Rhode Island, and disagreement ranging from 52.2% for Los Angeles principals to 70% for principals and teachers in New Orleans.

All parties, it seems, were overwhelmingly of the opinion that there should be some explicit connection between the plays and the curriculum, but all were almost equally as strongly of the opinion that the theatre should not just produce plays already being studied. The direction of influence, that is to say, should be from the theatre to the school curriculum and not the other way around.

Another pair of statements dealing with curricular aspects of the Project were 11 and 16:

> Too little time in school was spent studying the plays;
>
> Too much time was spent studying the plays.

New Orleans was the only one of the three sites in which teachers had been given explicit instructions to use the curriculum materials provided them to prepare students for the plays. So, not unexpectedly, students (58.8%) and teachers (83.7%) in New Orleans were most likely to disagree that the plays were studied too little. About 20% of students and only 4% of the teachers in New Orleans agreed the plays had been studied too little. In Rhode Island and Los Angeles, about 40% of students and 20% of teachers agreed the plays had been studied too little, while 40% and 50%, respectively, disagreed. A sizeable fraction of students, apparently, believed they would have benefitted from even more classroom study of the plays than they received.

Responding to the opposite proposition, that the plays had been studied too much, the students responded in this way:

STUDENTS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	7.7	12.6	10.1
Disagree	76.5	70.1	67.1

The teachers made these responses:

TEACHERS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	2.3	8.5	0
Disagree	77.3	63.8	74.3

And the principals these:

PRINCIPALS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	0	40.7	6.5
Disagree	77.8	33.3	78.3

Interpretation of the responses to the two questions, whether the plays were studied too little or too much, requires the introduction of some additional data on just how much the plays were studied in the three sites. Several items on the teacher questionnaire dealt with this matter. Teachers were asked to estimate how many class periods they had spent, on the average, in studying each of the Project plays before the production was seen by students and after it was seen by students. The responses of the teachers in the three sites are summarized in Table 4.

TABLE 4. Estimated Mean Class Periods

Spent in the Study of Each Play in Each Site

1. BEFORE PERFORMANCE

Number of Class Periods	Percentage Reporting Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
One or less	36.4	6.4	28.6
Two or three	43.2	48.9	45.7
Four or five	20.5	29.8	20.0
Six or more	0	14.9	5.7

2. AFTER PERFORMANCE

Number of Class Periods	Percentage Reporting Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
One or less	59.1	70.2	74.3
Two or three	40.9	27.7	25.7
Four or five	0	2.1	0
Six or more	0	0	0

The New Orleans teachers, as noted earlier, had been instructed they were to prepare students for the performances, while the teachers in the other sites were left much more free to follow their own judgments. And it is apparent from Part 1 of Figure 4 that the New Orleans teachers spent more class periods preparing students than did the teachers in the other sites. Many fewer New Orleans teachers and students in these circumstances, made the retrospective judgment that the plays had been studied too little; and relatively few of them made the judgment that the plays had been studied too much, so one might conclude that both teachers and students in New Orleans were satisfied that just about the right amount of time had been spent in the study of the plays.

More that 40% of the New Orleans principals, however, thought that the plays had been studied too much, perhaps reflecting a concern often voiced in other contexts, that between performances and preparation for them, the Theatre Project intruded disruptively into the established English curriculum. Principals in the other sites, where the plays were studied less intensively, did not often express such a concern.

In both Rhode Island and Los Angeles, more than 40% of students and 20% of teachers judged that the time spent studying the plays was inadequate, and less than 10% judged it was excessive. This strongly suggests that a sizeable number of students found the classroom study of the plays a valuable adjunct to attendance at the performances of them.

(The fact that teachers in all sites reported spending considerably more time on the plays before the performances than after them is, by the way, one concrete instance of a difference in philosophy which separated educators and the theatre people throughout the project. The educators saw their job as preparing students to understand and enjoy the plays. The actors believed that classroom study should come after the performance and be concerned primarily with the performance itself, not the script; and they feared that excessive classroom preparation would inhibit the students' spontaneous response to the performance. The most rigorous experimental study conducted as part of the assessment of the Project evaluated these opposing positions, and the study is reported at length in a separate volume of this report.)

Two more statements concerned the part that the actors in the resident companies should play in the educational process. The first of these, Statement 3, read:

> The actors should more often come into classrooms to talk to the students about the plays.

About 75% of students in Rhode Island and New Orleans and 58.8% in Los Angeles agreed with this statement, the lower percentage of agreement in the latter site being due largely to a large proportion of "no opinion" responses, rather than to more disagreements, this situation probably being a reflection of the fact that there was less extensive classroom visitation by actors in Los Angeles than in the other sites. Among the teachers, 84.1% of Rhode Island teachers agreed with the statement, signifying their endorsement of the educational value of such visits, while only slightly over 50% of teachers in the other two sites agreed, the differences in percentage of agreement perhaps being interpretable as a tribute to the quality of the in-school services provided in Rhode Island.

Statement 36, which was not included in the principal questionnaire, read:

> There should be more opportunity for students to talk to actors and other theatre people.

Although it was in Rhode Island where students had, in fact, the most opportunity to interact with people from the resident company, it was also in Rhode Island where the largest number of teachers agreed with the statement.

TEACHERS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	86.4	76.6	68.6
Disagree	2.3	6.4	14.3

But the low percentage of disagreement in all sites is evidence that teachers in general recognized the educational value of personal contacts between the students and the members of the company producing the plays. The students in all three sites agreed overwhelmingly with the statement, with agreement being somewhat greater in New Orleans and Rhode Island than in Los Angeles:

STUDENTS:	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	82.7	85.0	73.3
Disagree	3.3	2.5	8.2

The final subcategory dealing with the educational aspects of the Project might be called "Incidental Benefits." It contains only two items, 15 and 30. Statement 15 records a sentiment expressed by a few educators in each of the sites:

> One good thing about the Theatre Project was that it gave students the chance to see their teachers outside of the classroom.

The idea seems to have been that seeing teachers in more informal situations (on the bus, in the theatre lobby) would allow students to learn that their teachers were "human." No one, anywhere, thought very much of the idea. About 40% of the responses were "no opinion" and only about 10% of any group of respondents agreed that seeing teachers outside of the classroom was a good thing.

The final statement in the category, 30, had to do with the mixing of students from different schools in the theatre audience. This was an important aspect of the Project only in New Orleans, where the very large theatre meant that students from several schools often were in attendance at any given performance, and in Los Angeles, where it was the policy of the Project's management to schedule several schools for each performance. In Rhode Island, with its smaller house, audiences usually consisted of students from a single school, or, occasionally, of students from several small--and usually private--schools. Statement 30 read:

> One good thing about the Theatre Project is that it has given students from different schools a chance to meet one another.

There is a good deal of discussion, later in this volume, of the nature of the student audiences in each of the three sites, and no extended consideration of this matter will be undertaken here, except to note that the scheduling together of different schools in both New Orleans and Los Angeles involved crossing well-established lines of racial and economic (and, in New Orleans, sexual) separation that existed in the community and were reflected in the schools. It is notable that the minority who agreed that the mixing of students from different schools was a good thing was largest in Los Angeles, where the student population is the most diverse and the mixing was undertaken as a matter of educational policy. In New Orleans, support for the mixing of students was almost nonexistent among teachers and principals, but somewhat higher among students.

With responses from Rhode Island omitted, the students, teachers, and principals responded in this way:

	Students		Teachers		Principals	
	NO	LA	NO	LA	NO	LA
Agree	20.7	32.2	4.3	17.1	3.7	37.0
Disagree	56.3	42.4	68.1	42.9	66.7	42.4

Artistic Aspects of the Project

This second category includes statements about the quality of the productions themselves. Since earlier studies had shown that there was a considerable "halo effect" in regard to judgments of a production, so that one could predict from ratings of, say, the acting, ratings that would be given to the production details and to the overall quality of the production, relatively few items referring to the artistic aspects of the Project were required. Or so we reasoned.

Item 34, which was not included in the principal questionnaire, called for a global judgment about the artistic progress of the company:

> As the Theatre Project went on, the plays became better and more interesting.

Agreement with this statement pretty clearly would indicate approval of the progress made by the resident company. But disagreement might mean either (1) that there was no improvement in quality or (2) that the company was so good to start with that there was no room for improvement. Objectively, the case probably was that Trinity Square in Rhode Island started off as a competent company and got progressively better; that the Repertory Company, New Orleans, started off as a highly professional group and, at the least, maintained its standard of quality; and that the Inner City Repertory Company started off poorly but later did several good productions, although they never attained the level of professionalism routinely maintained by both Trinity Square and Repertory Theatre, New Orleans. (See, especially, the summary, later in this volume, of the reports of the Project's Advisory Committee for documentation of these judgements.)

The responses of the students and teachers in the three sites conformed, in a general way, to the judgments of the experts who were familiar with the three companies, though the students were more generous than the teachers in their evaluations of the progress made by the individual companies. These percentages agreed the plays had gotten better.

STUDENTS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	58.6	40.7	30.2
Disagree	13.0	29.6	31.1

TEACHERS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	43.2	19.1	17.1
Disagree	36.4	46.8	48.6

Statements 2 and 6 concerned the acting in the productions. These read:

> The acting in the plays was consistently excellent.
>
> Sometimes the actors were not very good.

Again, the between-site differences in response to these statements confirmed the judgments made by professional critics and expert observers during the course of the Project; and, as before, the students tended to be more generous in their judgments than the teachers. (The statements were not included on the principal questionnaires.) These were the responses to the statement that the acting was always excellent:

STUDENTS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	73.2	61.3	30.9
Disagree	12.8	23.3	45.1

TEACHERS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	77.3	44.6	5.7
Disagree	18.2	42.5	91.4

And, to the statement that the actors sometimes were no good, these responses were given:

STUDENTS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	20.1	37.1	66.9
Disagree	60.7	44.9	16.0

TEACHERS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	31.8	48.9	91.4
Disagree	56.8	36.1	5.7

Another item, number 28, stated:

> The staging of the plays was excellent in all its details--sets, costumes, lights, sound, and so on.

Objectively, the New Orleans company would probably get the highest marks for technical excellence, with the Trinity Square Company perhaps equalling them in this regard by the end of the Project, and with the Inner City Company (due in part to budgetary problems) seldom attaining a very high level of technical excellence. The judgments of the students and teachers again agreed, in a general way, with the judgments made by experts during the course of the Project. The following percentages of students and teachers in the three sites agreed and disagreed that the staging of the plays was consistently excellent:

STUDENTS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	73.7	71.1	30.7
Disagree	12.6	16.8	42.7

TEACHERS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	86.4	91.5	11.4
Disagree	13.6	8.5	74.3

The final statement in this category dealt with a matter that was often commented on during the Project--the question of whether the actors "played down" to student audiences, played differently or more broadly for student than for adult audiences. Statement 4 read this way:

> The actors sometimes played down to student audiences, as if they were playing for little kids.

The responses that were made to the statement are puzzling, in the light of other responses. First of all, unlike the case with the other statements dealing with artistic quality, there is no agreement at all between teachers and students about whether the actors played down; rather, there is a negative correlation between the groups. Second, among teachers, there was an unexpected high positive correlation between agreement with statement and agreement with other favorably phrased statements about the respective resident companies. The student and teacher responses were as follows.

STUDENTS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	9.5	17.7	25.3
Disagree	76.6	63.5	50.9

TEACHERS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	77.3	59.5	11.4
Disagree	13.6	8.5	77.1

The students, obviously, did not generally perceive that they were being played down to by the resident companies in any of the sites, and, across sites, disagreement with the statement is positively related to the level of positive judgments of the company as expressed in response to the other statements in this category. That is, to the extent that the students thought the company was artistically excellent, they also thought the actors in it did not play down to them.

Teacher perceptions were quite the opposite. To the extent that they thought the company was artistically excellent, they also thought that the actors in it sometimes played down to the students. There seem to be two possible explanations for this state of affairs. The first is that the students and teachers understood the phrase "played down" differently, with the term not having for teachers the negative connotations it apparently had for the students (and presumably would have for theatre-oriented critics of the Project.) Perhaps the teachers understood "playing down" to mean something like "playing at a level appropriate to the students," somewhat in the same way that an effective teacher of literature has to translate the complexities of mature literature into terms with which youngsters can deal. This conjecture would explain why responses to this statement would depart so drastically from the previous established pattern, in which teachers and students within any one site agreed with one another and there were consistent differences between sites in the level of approval of the work of the resident companies.

A second, and more trivial, explanation that may be suggested is that the teachers paid more attention to the word "sometimes" in the statement than did the students, so that the student denial that the actors "sometimes" played down should not be taken literally, but as a statement of the general case, while the teachers' agreement should be taken as (possibly) just an acknowledgement that once or twice they had observed actors "playing down" to the students. If this is the case, substitution of the word "often" for "sometimes" or complete omission of the qualifier might have produced quite different responses to the statement.[1]

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[1] Or, perhaps, teachers were recalling instances of blatant overplaying very early in the Project, before the actors got to know the student audiences. In this case, the differences between teachers and students would in part be due to the fact that more teachers than students would be in a position to recall that such things "sometimes" happened.

The statements in the third category all dealt with the administrative arrangements of the Project or suggested changes in particular procedures. The first of these was Statement number 32, which read:

> The Theatre Project would have worked just as well, and have been much less expensive, if the actors had brought the plays to the schools, rather than the schools taking students to the theatre.

The respondents in Rhode Island had had the greatest amount of experience with shows in the schools (as opposed to actors talking or demonstrating), but there had been touring shows in many of the schools in New Orleans and Los Angeles during the final year of the Project in each of those sites. In agreement with this statement there were large and consistent between-site differences, and, within sites, differences between students and teachers, on the one hand, and principals on the other. One may conjecture that the consistently large percentage of agreement with this statement by principals is a function of their being more concerned with the disruption of the school routine than students or English teachers, and that the higher level of agreement with the statement among all groups in Los Angeles may be a function of (1) the fact that the Project in Los Angeles was, objectively, much more disruptive of routine than it was in the other sites (since only a fraction of the student body participated, and these attended over several days) and (2) that, in Los Angeles, the in-theatre experience was less decisively superior to what might have been achieved in a school auditorium than in the other two sites. The responses on which these suggestions are based are summarized below.

STUDENTS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	6.2	6.5	18.6
Disagree	79.3	78.2	53.5

TEACHERS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	4.5	0	31.4
Disagree	79.3	78.2	25.7

PRINCIPALS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	25.9	18.5	43.5
Disagree	48.1	63.0	32.6

Four other statements dealt with revisions in administrative arrangements which would alter aspects of the Project with which there was dissatisfaction in some quarters. Statement 27 suggested that:

> A way should be worked out so that students can attend the plays with adult audiences.

In Rhode Island and New Orleans, about 35% of the students and 45% of the teachers agreed with this, while in Los Angeles 45% of the students and 66% of the teachers agreed. Of the principals, 37% agreed in Rhode Island, 48.1% in New Orleans, and 65.2% in Los Angeles.

A higher percentage of all groups agreed with Statement number 21:

> Students who would rather attend the plays at night, rather than during the school day, should be allowed to do so.

And there were between-group and between-site differences corresponding to those in the responses to Statement number 27. About 50% of students agreed in all sites; 40% of teachers in Rhode Island and New Orleans and 80% in Los Angeles agreed; and principal agreement was 37% in Rhode Island, 48.1% in New Orleans, and 66.3% in Los Angeles.

Both the statements in question--that students should attend with adults and that students should be allowed to attend at night--embody a number of concerns that are not necessarily related to one another. Some critics of the Project disliked the idea of an audience composed entirely of adolescents, arguing that this was not a situation in which one could really learn to be either a good audience member or a theatre-goer. But the same suggestions were also made by people who did not believe that theatre was important enough that students should be allowed to miss classes to attend it. A partial explanation for the fact that there was more agreement with the suggestion that students should attend at night than with the suggestion that students should attend with adults is that the first of these arrangements would be likely to reduce disruption of the school schedule.

The between-site differences in responses to both items of course reflect differences in community standards and habits as well as differences in geographical circumstances. But the higher approval of both statements in Los Angeles is also certainly due, in part, to the fact that all students participating in the Los Angeles Project at the time the questionnaire was distributed were twelfth-graders, while the Projects in the other sites involved three high school grades and, consequently, large numbers of younger students for whom attendance with adults or attendance at night would be less appropriate.

Statement number 8 was another one that was advocated both by theatre people concerned about the authenticity of the Project experience and by people who thought theatre was an educational frill:

> Students should not have to go to plays unless they really want to.

About 65% of the students in Rhode Island and New Orleans and 84% in Los Angeles agreed with this. About 40% of the teachers in the former two sites and 66% in the latter agreed with it. Among the principals, 51.9% in both Rhode Island and New Orleans agreed, while 75% in Los Angeles agreed. This suggests there was considerable dissatisfaction with the compulsory nature of the program, but it is probably safe to conjecture that the different groups of respondents had different reasons for agreeing that the Project should be voluntary. The students could be expected to object on principle to anything compulsory, whether it be theatre attendance or physical education. The teachers, and, to some extent, the principals probably based their responses on their judgements of the educational value of the Project, with a lower percentage of agreement indicating a higher estimation of the value of the theatre experience. And the principals' responses were probably influenced both by educational considerations and by the desire to minimize disruptions and extra work for their staffs (voluntary attendance would have greatly simplified the record-keeping work of the schools as well as probably reducing the number of students attending the plays).

Statement number 9 suggested that:

> Some way should be found to eliminate hauling everyone to the theatre in school buses.

Students, on the whole, accepted the bus rides as routine, as did most of the teachers. And once the initial problems had been worked out, the scheduling and loading of the buses was no great problem. The desire to eliminate the bussing was expressed primarily by non-educators who saw the trips to the theatre being turned into what one critic called a "herd experience." But no one suggested a realistic alternative to buses as a means of transporting the tens of thousands of students involved in the Project. In all three sites, about 25% of students agreed with the statement, and one could guess this 25% were those with cars or friends with cars. In both Rhode Island and New Orleans, about 20% of students and 40% of teachers agreed with the suggestion, while the corresponding percentages in Los Angeles were 54.3% and 47.8%, with these differences undoubtedly being related to the fact that the Los Angeles students were older than most of those involved in the other sites.

Another pair of statements, 13 and 19, dealt with changes in the number of plays to be presented.

> There should have been fewer plays each year;
>
> There should have been more plays each year.

Less than 4% of students and less than 14% of teachers in all the sites agreed there should have been fewer plays. But 18.5% of Rhode Island principals, 40.1% of New Orleans principals, and 39.1% of Los Angeles principals agreed. Again, this reflects the number of principals among those sampled who were greatly concerned about minimizing disruptions of routine.

The responses to the statement that there should have been more plays were these:

STUDENTS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	86.0	76.4	65.4
Disagree	4.9	11.9	14.9

TEACHERS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	61.4	21.3	14.3
Disagree	20.5	63.8	57.1

PRINCIPALS

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Agree	18.5	7.4	6.5
Disagree	66.7	77.8	78.3

The students in all sites would have liked more plays. And both the teachers and principals in Rhode Island expressed a great deal more agreement with the statement than their counterparts in the other sites. (But it must be borne in mind that to Rhode Islanders, the statement would have meant "more than three plays," while to those in the other sites, it would have meant "more than four plays.")

Three of the items had to do with discipline problems and the handling of them. In a general way, the following things are true of the discipline problems in the three sites. In Rhode Island, such problems were at a minimum, the worst occurances usually being on the order of rudeness, inattention, and sneaking out of the theatre. In New Orleans, there were more serious infractions--including drunkenness and vandalism--but these were infrequent and rather strictly confined to a small number of students from particular white public schools, and the incidents tended to decrease as the Project went along. In Los Angeles, infractions, including especially drug offenses and vandalism, were both more numerous and more serious, with most of the blame being placed on certain students from particular black schools and on non-students who came to the theatre with these black schools. The policy of constituting audiences of relatively small numbers of students from various schools seemed to magnify the extent of discipline problems in Los Angeles, since at almost any performance there were likely to be at least several rowdies. This background is given here so that it is clear that the respondents in the different sites were responding from different backgrounds of experience, and that the statements therefore did not mean the same thing to the respondents in the different sites.

Statement number 22 read:

> Students who cannot behave themselves should not be allowed to go to the theatre.

Agreement with this statement was unanimously high, ranging between 71% and 89% for all groups in all sites. Disagreement, interestingly enough, was highest among principals and lowest among students.

Statement number 23 read:

> The students from some schools are always noisy and unruly in the theatre.

Agreement with this statement was consistently higher for students, teachers, and principals in Los Angeles than for corresponding groups in the other sites, with principals consistently agreeing less often with the statement than teachers, and teachers less often than students. In Rhode Island and New Orleans, somewhat less than 50% of students agreed, compared to 60% in Los Angeles; less than 30% of teachers in the first two sites agreed, compared with 54.3% in Los Angeles; and, among the principals, only 11% in Rhode Island agreed, compared with 22.2% in New Orleans and 45.7% in Los Angeles. The between-group differences may reflect levels of awareness of what went on in an audience, with students being more aware than teachers of individual infractions, and with principals typically being aware of only the sorts of misbehaviors serious enough to be brought before them for action. In this case, the increasing discrepancies between sites as one moves from students to teachers to principals would be a reflection of the fact, already commented on, that the frequency of serious infractions differed between sites.

Statement 25 extended to unruly schools the suggestion that unruly students should be segregated:

> Schools whose students are well-behaved should not be scheduled to go to the theatre with schools whose students consistently misbehave.

In contrast to their responses to the earlier questions, students were less likely than adults to agree with this suggestion. Agreement with the suggestions was consistently lower for all Rhode Island groups (about 40%) than for all groups from New Orleans (which ranged from 58.6% student agreement to 66.7% principal agreement) or Los Angeles (which ranged from 46% student agreement to 60.9% principal agreement).

(Remembering that "misbehavior" differed qualitatively from site to site, it should still be noted that the Rhode Island groups had less experience than those in the other sites with both serious misbehavior and with audiences composed of students from dissimilar schools.)

The final two items, 17 and 18, deal with the physical characteristics of the various theatres which housed the Project, and the responses do little except confirm what would be apparent to anyone who had attended a play in the three theatres. Statements 17 and 18 read:

> Not all students are able to hear the plays clearly;
>
> The theatre building itself should be made more comfortable.

Less than half of the Rhode Island respondents agreed that some students could not hear the play clearly (the house had a dead area, from which seating was eventually removed in a redesigning of the stage), while about 70% of the New Orleans and 80% of Los Angeles respondents agreed that this was the case.

To the suggestion that the theatre should be made more comfortable, from 14% to 27% of Rhode Island respondents agreed, while from 40.7% to 61.7% of New Orleans and from 50% to 77% of Los Angeles respondents agreed. The percentages of agreement pretty accurately reflect the relative conditions of the theatres in which the three Projects were housed.

Summary of Student, Teachers, and Principal Opinions

Twenty-five of the forty statements that have just been examined may be classed as "favorable" or "unfavorable" to the Project, with the remainder not involving value judgments upon aspects of the Project itself. One way to summarize the differences between the three sites in favorableness of reaction to the Project is to rank order the three sites according to the percentage of agreement with the favorably phrased statements and percentage of disagreement with the unfavorably phrased statements, and to see how the three sites are ranked across all 25 of the value judgement items. If, for each of the items, a rank of 1 is assigned to the site with the highest mean percentage of responses favorable to the Project, rank 2 assigned to the next most favorable, and rank 3 to the least favorable, we have the situation represented in Table 5.

Insert Table 5 Here

The mean rank for Rhode Island is 1.12; for New Orleans, 2.32; and for Los Angeles, 2.80. One need not resort to a statistical test to determine that the differences between the sites in the reception given the Project are real ones. The interviews, the solicited and unsoli-

TABLE 5 Summary of Responses to the 25 Value-laden Questionnaire Statements, with the Three Sites Rank-ordered by Degree of Favorableness to the Project

Classification	Statement Number	Ranks Rhode Island	 New Orleans	 Los Angeles
		(by % agreeing)		
Favorable				
	2	1	2	3
	7	1	2	3
	10	2	1	3
	11	1	3	2
	12	1	2	3
	14	1	2	3
	24	1	2	3
	26	2	1	3
	28	1	2	3
	29	1	2	3
	31	1	2	3
	33	1	2	3
	34	1	2	3
	37	2	1	3
	39	1	2	3
		(by % disagreeing)		
Unfavorable				
	1	1	3	2
	4	1	2	3
	5	1	2	3
	6	1	2	3
	13	1	2	3
	16	1	2	3
	19	1	3	2
	20	1	3	2
	35	1	3	2
	40	1	2	3

1 = Most favorable
2 = Second most favorable
3 = Least favorable

cited reactions, and the formal and informal reports which make up the rest of this volume will give the reader a clearer idea why the teachers, students, and principals in the three sites had such divergent impressions of the value of the Project.

Two more items asked about specific student benefits from involvement in the Project. The first of these asked: "Do you think students have increased their interest in literature as a result of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project?" The percentage of teachers in each site choosing each alternative is given below.

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Increased a good deal	40.5	44.7	17.1
Increased slightly	52.4	40.4	45.7
Did not increase	7.1	14.9	34.3

Two things may be noted here. First, the estimates of the effects of the Project upon interest in literature seem to be positively related to the value judgments made by the teachers in each site upon the Project as a whole. Second, the percentage of teachers--even in Los Angeles--who testified that their students become more interested in literature because of the Project is, considering the infrequency and short duration of the theatre experiences, rather surprisingly large. It seems that the Project may have done what Roger Stevens thought it would do: "make literature study more interesting."

The next item asked: "Do you think that students...have shown any improvement in language skills or reading skills as a result of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project?" Responses were as follows.

	Rhode Island	New Orleans	Los Angeles
Slight improvement	34.1	44.7	22.9
Much improvement	12.2	19.1	2.9
No improvement	53.7	36.2	71.4

The between-site differences are large, here, but the number of teachers testifying to the project's positive effects upon language skills is, all things considered, remarkably large.

The first dozen items on the student questionnaires inquired about matters of taste and habit that might conceivably have been affected by the ELT experience. Four of these items were repeated verbatim from the first year's questionnaire, and the others parallelled items on that first questionnaire.

A multivariate analysis of variance was run on the four identically phrased items, with site, year, socioeconomic status, and ability level as independent variables. A similar series of comparisons were run on the other items after they had been recoded to make responses on the two occasions as comparable as possible. Only one finding in regard to these latter items is of interest, and that should be taken as highly suspect, because the question was not asked the same way on the two occasions. This finding was that significantly more students in Rhode Island and Los Angeles reported attending non-Project plays at the end of the Project than had at the beginning; while in New Orleans the opposite was the case, and fewer students reported attending plays at the end of the Project than had reported doing so at the beginning.

The four items that appeared on both the first and last questionnaires were intended to determine:

1. Whether or not the student had read a non-assigned play in the past year;

2. Whether the student had ever participated in some dramatic activity (acted, built scenery, etc.);

3. Whether the student considered English his most worthwhile subject;

4. How highly the student valued plays in comparison to other aspects of the English curriculum.

First, students in all three sites were significantly more likely to have read a non-assigned play during the third year of the project than during the first year. (Only in Los Angeles might this be ascribed to maturation.) Rhode Island showed the greatest increase in the percentage of students who had read non-assigned plays--from 35% in the first year to 61% in the third year. The percentage of Los Angeles students who reported reading non-assigned plays increased from 47% to 59%; in New Orleans the increase was from 49% to 57%. In all three locations, middle ability students showed the greatest increase in play-reading over the three years. In Rhode Island, the high SES students most often read extra plays; in both New Orleans and Los Angeles, it was the middle SES group which most frequently read unassigned plays, while the high SES students did so less frequently than even low SES students.

In the first year of the Project, 58% of all students reported that they had participated in some sort of dramatic activity. By the third year, 77% indicated some kind of participation. The increase by site and year is as follows:

	New Orleans	Rhode Island	Los Angeles
First year	68%	50%	57%
Third year	81%	77%	73%

High ability students were more apt to have participated in some dramatic activity in all sites. There were no significant differences between SES levels.

Slightly more than 50% of the students in Rhode Island and New Orleans chose English as their most worthwhile subject in both the first and third years. (Los Angeles students' preferences were most varied of the three groups and Los Angeles students valued social studies more highly than did students in other two sites.) Los Angeles students' nominations of English as most worthwhile increased from 22% to 41% between the first to the third years. SES and ability level seemed to make no difference in any of the sites.

On the third year questionnaire, 16% of New Orleans students indicated they preferred plays to the other types of literature studied in their English classes. In Rhode Island 13% made this choice and in Los Angeles, 12%. Only in Rhode Island did this represent a significant increase in preference for plays, up from 10% on first year student questionnaires.

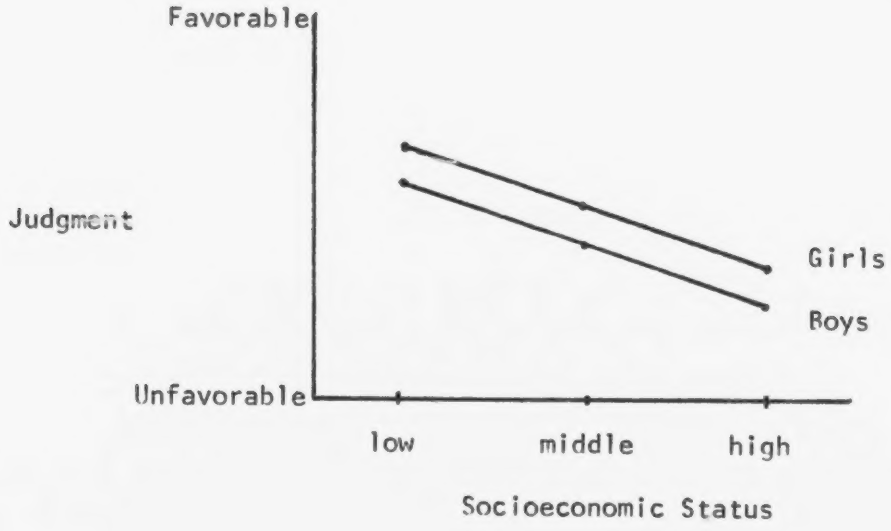
One final set of items to be considered at this point were added to the Los Angeles questionnaires only. The eleven items in this set asked about the effects of the interracial casting practices of the ICRC upon different aspects of the Project. Respondents were to choose a point on a five-point scale, that ranged from "very good" to "very bad" to record their judgment about how the interracial casting had affected the particular aspect of the Project named in the item. The eleven items are on the last page of the sample questionnaires appended to this chapter.

We had originally intended this set of items as a sort of addendum to the series of studies of responses to interracial casting that are reported in the "Studies" volume of this report. As it turned out, though, the students responded to the eleven items in the set as if they were restatements of earlier items which asked for global judgments about the value of the Project, and, furthermore, they responded as if each item was a restatement of the ten others in the set. Intercorrelations between the items ranged from a high of .70 to a low of .39 (which latter is significant beyond .01; some statistics are unavoidable in discussing this set of items.)

A principal components factor analysis showed that there was single strong factor, that all eleven items loading highly on it (between .692 and .786), and that this factor accounted for 56% of the total variance.

An analysis of variance, School SES by Sex, was carried out, with the eleven items as dependent variables. The main effects of both of the independent variables were significant beyond the .01 level, with students from low socioeconomic status schools being most positive toward interracial casting and students from high SES schools being least positive, and girls being more positive than boys.

The interaction contrast between SES and Sex can be graphed as follows:



This is precisely the pattern that we had found in responses to items asking for assessments of the Theatre Project, but a pattern contrary to what we generally had found in studies of responses to interracial casting. We knew that students and teachers in the higher SES schools had been consistently more critical of the quality of the Inner City productions than students and teachers in other schools, but we had found no evidence that there were differences in responses to interracial casting that could be associated with differences in socioeconomic status.

The analyses that have already been reported suggest that the items we had intended for measuring responses to the interracial dimensions of the Theatre Project instead simply measured attitudes towards the Project's value. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that the open-ended comments on the effects of interracial casting, which we invited respondents to make, rarely contained negative or positive value judgments on interracial casting itself (E.g., "great idea!" "Why don't they just do black plays?" "I am prejudice against mixing races.") but rather comments upon the effects that unprofessional minority actors had on the shows, on the inconsistency of the ICRC ("Why wasn't Raisin in the Sun integrated?"), or on the ways that "unnatural" casting distorted or distracted interest from the play. Some typical comments are quoted below:

> The students want to see the best actors in the best possible roles, and not a casting which puts a white in to play opposite a black just to get a racial mixture. If the white is best for his or her role and the black is best for his or her role, then the casting

> would be just fine. Racial intolerance was caused by casting that was automatic--the man had to be black because the lead lady was white.
>
> Some plays are written to provide a social comment. If the races are interchanged, it sometimes detracts from the value of the play.
>
> Interracial casting was not a failure because most students were bigots, but rather because it detracted from whatever realism was present in the plays.

And so on. (Other comments collected on these questionnaires are reported later in this volume.)

Analyses of teacher and principal responses to these items revealed little more about attitudes toward the interracial casting itself. Again, attitudes ranged from mildly approving to mildly disapproving, were highly correlated with one another and with responses to general opinion questions. Across the three groups, taking the means across all eleven items, students (mean of 3.40) were more favorable than principals (mean of 3.35) who were, in turn, more favorable than teachers (mean of 3.15). We had found in other studies that the students generally were more favorable to the Project and to its interracial aspects than adults, and especially teachers; but it is notable that even the teacher mean is slightly toward the "positive" side (3.00 = neutral or no opinion) in evaluating the effects of the interraciality of the ICRC upon the details of the Project. The weak vote of confidence in the Project represented by these responses can perhaps best be interpreted as indicating (1) a lack of strong or widespread resistance to interracial casting, despite the criticisms of its effects upon the artistic quality and coherence of the shows, and (2) a persisting resevoir of good will toward the Project despite its having disappointed many of the respondents.

APPENDIX 1: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

CEMREL, Inc.
EOP - LA

EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY THEATRE PROJECT

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME____ DATE____________

SCHOOL____

We are asking teachers, pupils, and school administrators in Los Angeles to answer a number of questions about the EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY THEATRE PROJECT, so that we may put together as accurate an account as possible of its effects on the schools that have been involved in it during the past three years. We thank you for permitting one of your classes to take the time to fill in the student questionnaire, and we would like to ask you to help us further by completing this teacher questionnaire. All responses will, of course, be held completely confidential, and it will be impossible for anyone to identify from CEMREL's final report, responses from any teacher or even from any school.

1. Please describe the class of students that is filling out the student questionnaire by putting a check mark in the space in front of the most accurate work or phrase in each of the following three groups.

   A. Range of ability

   (1) ______Ability grouped (homogeneous)
   (2) ______Not ability grouped (heterogeneous)

   B. General level of ability

   (1) ______Gifted
   (2) ______Above average
   (3) ______Average
   (4) ______Below average
   (5) ______Basic or remedial

   C. Coeducational or all one sex?

   (1) ______All girls
   (2) ______All boys
   (3) ______Both boys and girls

2. How much time do you estimate you have spent, on the average, dealing with each of the Theatre Project plays in this class?

   A. Class periods before performance

      (1) ______One or less
      (2) ______Two or three
      (3) ______Four or five
      (4) ______Six or more

   B. Class periods after performance

      (1) ______One or less
      (2) ______Two or three
      (3) ______Four or five
      (4) ______Six or more

3. Looking back over the three years of the project, has your way of treating a play in the classroom changed as a result of the Theatre Project?

      (1) ______Yes, but only slightly
      (2) ______Yes, a great deal
      (3) ______No, not in any important way

4. Has your attitude toward the place of dramatic activities in the English classroom changed as a result of the project?

      (1) ______Yes, but only slightly
      (2) ______Yes, a great deal
      (3) ______No, not in any important way

5. If your answers to either of the previous two questions indicates that you have changed your attitudes or your practices as a result of the Theatre Project, please tell us briefly what these changes have been and why they have come about.

6. Directly below are listed the titles of the plays that the Theatre Project has presented in the past three years.

(a) ____Tartuffe
(b) ____Sea Gull
(c) ____Glass Menagerie
(d) ____Midsummer Night's Dream
(e) ____Raisin in the Sun
(f) ____Our Town
(g) ____Macbeth
(h) ____Fantasticks
(i) ____West Side Story
(j) ____Room Service
(k) ____Antigone

A. Put a check mark in the space in front of the title of each play that you have seen.

B. Which of the plays that you have seen did you enjoy the most? (Write the letter that identifies the play in the space below.)

____

C. Which of the plays do you believe the students in this class enjoyed the most? (Write the letter of the play in the space below.)

____

D. Which of the plays did you find was most valuable to you from the standpoint of classroom instruction?

____

E. Which of the plays best represents the sort of play you think has the greatest educational value?

____

F. Which of the plays did you assign to be read by students in classes such as the present one? (You may write in the letters identifying the plays, if you assigned only a few; or you may answer "All" or "All but A and D," as the case may be.)

____

7. The following is a list of the instructional materials that might have been included in a typical portfolio prepared in connection with a Theatre Project play. Please indicate which type of material you normally found most useful and least useful by writing an M in the space in front of the most useful type of material and an L in the space in front of the least useful type of material.

(1) _____Copies of critical essays on the play
(2) _____The study guide
(3) _____Historical and background information
(4) _____Biographical information on the playwright
(5) _____Maps, pictures, and bulletin board displays
(6) _____Audiovisual materials (records, filmstrips)
(7) _____Bibliographies and lists of additional resources

8. An item often included in the portfolios was a copy of the play. This was omitted from the above list because, when this question was asked two years ago, almost everyone chose the copy of the play as the most used item. Would you agree that the text of the play itself is the most useful item for the teacher?

(1) _____Yes
(2) _____No
(3) _____It depends on the play

Comment upon your answer in the space below, if you wish.

9. Considering only those plays you assigned your classes to read, when did you ask your students to read the play?

(1) _____Before attending the performance
(2) _____After attending the performance
(3) _____Sometimes before, sometimes after (Please explain below)

10. Based on your whole experience with the project, what type of student do you think usually enjoyed the plays most?

A. By ability

(1) _____Bright students
(2) _____Average students
(3) _____Slower students
(4) _____No difference

B. By sex

(1) _____Girls
(2) _____Boys
(3) _____No difference

11. What type of student do you think benefited most from the experience of attending the theatre?

A. By ability

(1) _____Bright students
(2) _____Average students
(3) _____Slower students
(4) _____No difference

B. By sex

(1) _____Girls
(2) _____Boys
(3) _____No difference

12. How many times in the past year have you gone to a theatre to see a play, not counting the times you went with your students as part of the Theatre Project?

(1) _____None
(2) _____One
(3) _____Two
(4) _____Three
(5) _____More than three

13. Below are five statements of opinion about the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. Read all of the statements and then choose the one which comes closest to your own opinion of the project. Put a checkmark in front of that statement.

(1) _____Nothing the schools could have done would have been so good for the students and the community as the Theatre Project has been.
(2) _____The Theatre Project is one of the better things that the schools around here have done.
(3) _____For the most part, the Theatre Project has been worthwhile.
(4) _____The Theatre Project has been all right, but it would have been better to spend the money on more important subjects or on books and equipment.
(5) _____The Theatre Project has been a waste of time and money.

PLEASE NOTE THESE DIRECTIONS. Question 14 contains a long list of statements that have been made about the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. Some of them praise aspects of the Project, some contain suggestions about how it might be improved, and some of them criticize the Project. We are interested in how English teachers feel about all of these statements.

Read the statements. When you find one with which you definitely agree, circle the letter A in front of the statement. If you definitely disagree with a statement, circle the letter D. If you have no strong feelings either way, circle the letter N. (A = Agree; D = Disagree; N = No opinion.)

14. How do you personally feel about each of the following statements?

A D N (1) Most of the plays were not very closely related to the interests of teenagers.

A D N (2) The acting in the plays was consistently excellent.

A D N (3) The actors should more often come into classrooms to talk to the students about the plays.

A D N (4) The actors sometimes played down to student audiences, as if they were playing for little kids.

A D N (5) Students should just go to plays and enjoy them; the plays should not become part of the school curriculum.

A D N (6) Sometimes the actors were not very good.

A D N (7) Going to the plays helped make the study of literature more interesting.

A D N (8) Students should not have to go to plays unless they really want to.

A D N (9) Some way should be found to eliminate hauling everyone to the theatre in school buses.

A D N (10) Students learned how to behave more maturely from their experience of going to the theatre.

A D N (11) Too little time in school was spent studying the plays.

A D N (12) Going to the theatre was an exciting experience for most students.

A D N (13) There should have been fewer plays each year.

A D N (14) There should have been more plays each year.

A D N (15) One good thing about the Theatre Project was that it gave students the chance to see their teachers outside of the classroom.

A D N (33) The chance to meet with the actors has done a great deal to make students respect the theatre.

A D N (34) As the Theatre Project went on, the plays became better and more interesting.

A D N (35) More of the plays should deal with modern problems.

A D N (36) There should be more opportunity for students to talk with actors and theatre people.

A D N (37) English teachers have learned new teaching methods from their involvement with the Theatre Project.

A D N (38) The plays that are presented in the theatre should be the same ones that students normally study in their English classes.

A D N (39) After seeing the plays put on by the Theatre Project, students are much more likely to enjoy reading plays.

A D N (40) Most students would just as soon see a movie version of a play as see it "live" in the theatre.

15. We have been told about students who have been so influenced by the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project that the experience has changed their daily habits or their plans for a career. Some students, for instance, have decided to try to become actors or theatre technicians. Some have decided to become literature teachers or writers. Others have become involved for the first time in school or community dramatic activities. Do you know of any student on whom the Theatre Project has had a similar effect? If you do, please tell us about him on the back of the last page.

16. Have you observed any of the student activities connected with the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project--workshops, press conferences, etc?

(1) _____No
(2) _____Yes, and I thought they were generally valuable
(3) _____Yes, but I usually found them of little value

17. Have you participated in any of the activities for teachers that have taken place in connection with the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project--workshops, seminars, etc?

(1) _____No
(2) _____Yes, and I thought they were generally valuable
(3) _____Yes, but I usually found them of little value
(4) _____Some were of value, other not (Please elaborate)

A D N (16) Too much time was spent studying the plays.

A D N (17) Not all students were always able to hear the plays clearly.

A D N (18) The theatre building itself should be made more comfortable and pleasant.

A D N (19) The plays should not be so intellectual that large numbers of students are bored or bewildered.

A D N (20) There should be more action in the plays, since that is what young people like to see.

A D N (21) Students who would rather attend the plays at night, rather than during the school day, should be allowed to do so.

A D N (22) Students who cannot behave themselves should not be allowed to go to the theatre.

A D N (23) The students from some schools are always noisy and unruly in the theatre.

A D N (24) Attending the theatre has made students think more clearly about some of their own problems and the problems of the modern world.

A D N (25) Schools whose students are well-behaved should not be scheduled to go to the theatre with schools whose students consistently misbehave.

A D N (26) Students who become fans of particular actors and actresses also become more interested in the theatre and in drama.

A D N (27) A way should be worked out so that students can attend the plays along with adult audiences.

A D N (28) The staging of the plays was excellent in all its details--sets, costumes, lights, sound, and so on.

A D N (29) Student audiences have learned to behave more appropriately in the theatre as the Theatre Project has gone on.

A D N (30) One good thing about the Theatre Project is that it has given students from different schools a chance to meet one another.

A D N (31) Some English teacher started running more interesting classes as a result of the Theatre Project.

A D N (32) The Theatre Project would have worked just as well, and been much less expensive, if the actors had always brought the plays to the schools, rather than the schools' taking students to the theatre.

18. Do you think students such as those in this class have increased their interest in literature as a result of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project?

(1) _____Yes, but only slightly
(2) _____Yes, a good deal
(3) _____No

19. Do you think that students such as those in this class have shown any improvement in language skills or reading skills as a result of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project?

(1) _____Yes, but only slightly
(2) _____Yes, a good deal
(3) _____No

20. Do you think the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project should be continued?

(1) _____Yes
(2) _____No

21. Do you think that the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project should be continued even if it must be supported out of local school funds?

(1) _____Yes
(2) _____No

APPENDIX 2: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

CEMREL, Inc.
EOP - LA

EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY THEATRE PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

SCHOOL____DATE__________

YOUR ENGLISH TEACHER'S NAME____

YOUR SEX (circle one) M F

THE EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY THEATRE PROJECT and the Inner City Repertory Company will be three years old at the end of this school year. In that time, many people have formed opinions about the project and many have been more or less strongly affected by it. So that we may learn as much as possible about just what the effects of the Theatre Project has been in Los Angeles, we are asking students, teachers, and principals to answer a number of questions about the Theatre Project and about themselves. We thank you for helping us by completing this questionnaire.

PART ONE. These are questions that we asked students at the very beginning of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. We are repeating them now, so that we may get an idea whether any important changes have taken place that may be related to the Theatre Project.

1. Have you ever read, on your own, a play that was not assigned by a teacher?

   (1) _____Yes
   (2) _____No

2. Have you ever acted a part in a school play?

   (1) _____Yes
   (2) _____No

3. Have you ever worked in a school play--built scenery, helped with costumes or makeup, or did other work?

   (1) _____Yes
   (2) _____No

4. Have you ever taken part in a play or pageant not put on by a school--for instance, a play sponsored by a church or the Scouts?

   (1) _____Yes
   (2) _____No

5. Have you ever watched a movie or television production of a play by Shakespeare?

   (1) _____Yes
   (2) _____No

6. Have you ever tried to write a play?

(1) _____Yes
(2) _____No

7. How many hours a day do you watch television?

(1) _____Less than one hour
(2) _____From one to three hours
(3) _____From three to five hours
(4) _____More than five hours

8. Which, if any, of the following places do you usually visit at least twice a year? (Check as many answers as apply.)

(1) _____A school sports event
(2) _____A professional sports event
(3) _____A museum or art gallery
(4) _____A concert hall
(5) _____A public library
(6) _____A bookstore

9. Which high school subject do you think is the most worthwhile? (Check only one.)

(1) _____Art
(2) _____English
(3) _____History and Social Studies
(4) _____Home Economics
(5) _____Mathematics
(6) _____Music
(7) _____Physical Education
(8) _____Science
(9) _____Shop and Industrial Arts
(10) _____Other (Please write in) ______________________________

____

10. Which high school subject do you think is the least worthwhile?

(1) _____Art
(2) _____English
(3) _____History and Social Studies
(4) _____Home Economics
(5) _____Mathematics
(6) _____Music
(7) _____Physical Education
(8) _____Science
(9) _____Shop and Industrial Arts
(10) _____Other (Please write in) ______________________________

____

11. Of the things that are studied in English classes, which one do you like best?

(1) _____Grammar
(2) _____Essay writing
(3) _____Creative writing
(4) _____Stories and novels
(5) _____Plays
(6) _____Poetry
(7) _____Essays

12. Of the things that are studied in English classes, which one do you like least?

(1) _____Grammar
(2) _____Essay writing
(3) _____Creative writing
(4) _____Stories and novels
(5) _____Plays
(6) _____Poetry
(7) _____Essays

PART TWO. These are new questions, specifically about the Theatre Project.

13. Below is a list of the plays that the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project has presented in the past three years. Place a checkmark (✓) in front of the titles of those plays you have seen.

(1) ____Tartuffe
(2) ____Sea Gull
(3) ____Glass Menagerie
(4) ____Midsummer Night's Dream
(5) ____Raisin in the Sun
(6) ____Our Town
(7) ____Macbeth
(8) ____Fantasticks
(9) ____West Side Story
(10) ____Room Service
(11) ____Antigone

14. Think back on the plays whose titles you have just checked. Then answer the following three questions by writing in the title of one of the plays in each blank space.

A. The play I liked best was ________________________________.

B. The play that I liked least was ___________________________.

C. The play I will probably remember best ten years from now is ____. (This play may or may not be one of those you have written in already.

15. How many times in the past year have you gone to a theatre to see a play, not counting the times you went with your school as part of the Theatre Project?

(1) _____None
(2) _____One
(3) _____Two
(4) _____Three
(5) _____More than three

16. Below are five statements of opinions about the Theatre Project. Read all of the statements and then choose the one which comes closest to your own opinion of the project. Put a checkmark in front of that statement.

(1) _____Nothing the schools could have done would have been so good for the students and the community as the Theatre Project has been.
(2) _____The Theatre Project is one of the better things that the schools around here have done.
(3) _____For the most part, the Theatre Project has been worthwhile.
(4) _____The Theatre Project has been all right, but it would have been better to spend the money on more important subjects or on books and equipment.
(5) _____The Theatre Project has been a waste of time and money.

PLEASE NOTE THESE DIRECTIONS. Question 17 contains a long list of statements that have been made about the Theatre Project. Some of them praise aspects of the Project, some contain suggestions about how it might be improved, and some of them criticize the Project. We are interested in how students feel about these matters.

Read the statements. When you find one with which you definitely agree, circle the letter A in front of the statement. If you definitely disagree with a statement, circle the letter D. If you have no feelings either way, circle the letter N. (A = Agree; D = Disagree; N = No opinion.)

17. How do you personally feel about each of the following statements?

A D N (1) Most of the plays were not very closely related to the interests of teenagers.

A D N (2) The acting in the plays was consistently excellent.

A D N (3) The actors should more often come into classrooms to talk to the students about the plays.

A D N (4) The actors sometimes played down to student audiences, as if they were playing for little kids.

A D N (5) Students should just go to plays and enjoy them; the plays should not become part of the school curriculum.

A D N (6) Sometimes the actors were not very good.

A D N (7) Going to the plays helped make the study of literature more interesting.

A D N (8) Students should not have to go to plays unless they really want to.

A D N (9) Some way should be found to eliminate hauling everyone to the theatre in school buses.

A D N (10) Students learned how to behave more maturely from their experience of going to the theatre.

A D N (11) Too little time in school was spent studying the plays.

A D N (12) Going to the theatre was an exciting experience for most students.

A D N (13) There should have been fewer plays each year.

A D N (14) There should have been more plays each year.

A D N (15) One good thing about the Theatre Project was that it gave students the chance to see their teachers outside of the classroom.

A D N (16) Too much time was spent studying the plays.

A D N (17) Not all students were always able to hear the plays clearly.

A D N (18) The theatre building itself should be made more comfortable.

A D N (19) The plays should not be so intellectual that large numbers of students are bored or bewildered.

A D N (20) There should be more action in the plays, since that is what young people like to see.

A D N (21) Students who would rather attend the plays at night, rather than during the school day, should be allowed to do so.

A D N (22) Students who cannot behave themselves should not be allowed to go to the theatre.

A D N (23) The students from some schools are always noisy and unruly in the theatre.

A D N (24) Attending the theatre has made students think more clearly about some of their own problems and the problems of the modern world.

A D N (25) Schools whose students are well-behaved should not be scheduled to go to the theatre with schools whose students consistently misbehave.

A D N (26) Students who become fans of particular actors and actresses also become more interested in the theatre and in drama.

A D N (27) A way should be worked out so that students can attend the plays along with adult audiences.

A D N (28) The staging of the plays was excellent in all its details--sets, costumes, lights, sound, and so on.

A D N (29) Student audiences have learned to behave more appropriately in the theatre as the Theatre Project has gone on.

A D N (30) One good thing about the Theatre Project is that it has given students from different schools a chance to meet one another.

A D N (31) Some English teachers started running more interesting classes as a result of the Theatre Project.

A D N (32) The Theatre Project would have worked just as well, and been much less expensive, if the actors had always brought the plays to the schools, rather than the schools taking students to the theatre.

A D N (33) The chance to meet with the actors has done a great deal to make students respect the theatre.

A D N (34) As the Theatre Project went on, the plays became better and more interesting.

A D N (35) More of the plays should deal with modern problems.

A D N (36) There should be more opportunity for students to talk with actors and theatre people.

A D N (37) English teachers have learned new teaching methods from their involvement with the Theatre Project.

A D N (38) The plays that are presented in the theatre should be the same ones that students normally study in their English classes.

A D N (39) After seeing the plays put on by the Theatre Project, students are much more likely to enjoy reading plays.

A D N (40) Most students would just as soon see a movie version of a play as see it "live" in the theatre.

18. Besides attending the plays, which (if any) of the activities related to the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project have you participated in?

If you have participated in any of the above activities, how would you rate the experience?

(1) _____Very worthwhile
(2) _____O. K.
(3) _____Disappointing

19. We have been told that there are some students who have been so influenced by the Theatre Project that the experience has changed their daily habits or their plans for a career. Some students, for instance, have decided to try to become actors or theatre technicians. Some have decided to become literature teachers or writers. Others have become involved for the first time in school or community dramatic activities. Do you know of anyone--yourself, a friend, a classmate--on whom the Theatre Project has had a similar effect? If you do, please tell us about it.

20. Do you think the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project should be continued?

(1) _____Yes
(2) _____No

21. Do you think the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project should be continued even if it must be supported out of local school funds?

(1) _____Yes
(2) _____No

APPENDIX 3: PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

CEMREL, Inc.
EOP - LA

EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY THEATRE PROJECT

ADMINISTRATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME____ DATE________________

SCHOOL____

CEMREL is asking a sample of students, teachers, and school administrators in Los Angeles to answer a number of questions about the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project as the end of the third year of the project comes near. The facts and opinions we gather in this way will help us to draw up an accurate account of the effects of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project upon the schools of Los Angeles.

We thank you for allowing a number of English teachers and students in your school to complete these questionnaires, and we would like to ask you to assist us further by giving us the information asked for below. All responses will, of course, be confidential; and it will be impossible for any reader of CEMREL's final report to associate answers with any particular person or school.

PLEASE NOTE THESE DIRECTIONS. Question 1 contains a long list of statements that have been made about the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. Some of them praise aspects of the Project, some contain suggestions about how it might be improved, and some of them criticize the Project. We are interested in how school administrators feel about all of these statements.

Read the statements. When you find one with which you definitely agree, circle the letter A in front of the statement. If you definitely disagree with a statement, circle the letter D. If you have no strong feelings either way, circle the letter N. (A = Agree; D = Disagree; N = No opinion.)

1. How do you personally feel about each of the following statements?

A D N (1) Most of the plays were not very closely related to the interests of teenagers.

A D N (2) The actors should more often come into classrooms to talk to the students about the plays.

A D N (3) Students should just go to plays and enjoy them; the plays should not become part of the school curriculum.

A D N (4) Students should not have to go to plays unless they really want to.

A D N (5) Some way should be found to eliminate hauling everyone to the theatre in school buses.

A D N (6) Students learned how to behave more maturely from their experience of going to the theatre.

A D N (7) Too little time in school was spent studying the plays.

A D N (8) Going to the theatre was an exciting experience for most students.

A D N (9) There should have been fewer plays each year.

A D N (10) There should have been more plays each year.

A D N (11) One good thing about the Theatre Project was that it gave students the chance to see their teachers outside of the classroom.

A D N (12) Too much time was spent studying the plays.

A D N (13) The theatre building itself should be made more comfortable and pleasant.

A D N (14) The plays should not be so intellectual that large numbers of students are bored or bewildered.

A D N (15) Students who would rather attend the plays at night, rather than during the school day, should be allowed to do so.

A D N (16) Students who cannot behave themselves should not be allowed to go to the theatre.

A D N (17) The students from some schools are always noisy and unruly in the theatre.

A D N (18) Attending the theatre has made students think more clearly about some of their own problems and the problems of the modern world.

A D N (19) Schools whose students are well-behaved should not be scheduled to go to the theatre with schools whose students consistently misbehave.

A D N (20) A way should be worked out so that students can attend the plays along with adult audiences.

A D N (21) Student audiences have learned to behave more appropriately in the theatre as the Theatre Project has gone on.

A D N (22) One good thing about the Theatre Project is that it has given students from different schools a chance to meet one another.

A D N (23) Some English teachers started running more interesting classes as a result of the Theatre Project.

A D N (24) The Theatre Project would have worked just as well, and been much less expensive, if the actors had always brought the plays to the schools, rather than the schools' taking students to the theatre.

A D N (25) The chance to meet with the actors has done a great deal to make students respect the theatre.

A D N (26) More of the plays should deal with modern problems.

A D N (27) English teachers have learned new teaching methods from their involvement with the Theatre Project.

A D N (28) The plays that are presented in the theatre should be the same ones that students normally study in their English classes.

A D N (29) After seeing the plays put on by the Theatre Project, students are much more likely to enjoy reading plays.

A D N (30) Most students would just as soon see a movie version of a play as see it "live" in the theatre.

2. Imagine the clock has been turned back more than three years, and the plans for the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project have just been announced. If you were asked for suggestions about how the plans might be revised so that the project would run smoothly and students get utmost benefit from it, what changes would you suggest?

3. Below are five statements of opinion about the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. Read all of the statements and then choose the one which comes closest to your own opinion of the project. Put a checkmark in front of that statement.

(1) ______Nothing the schools could have done would have been so good for the students and the community as the Theatre Project has been.
(2) ______The Theatre Project is one of the better things that the schools around here have done.

(3) ______For the most part, the Theatre Project has been worthwhile.
(4) ______The Theatre Project has been all right, but it would have been better to spend the money on more important subjects or on books and equipment.
(5) ______The Theatre Project has been a waste of time and money.

4. Do you think the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project should be continued?

(1) ______Yes
(2) ______No

5. Do you think the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project should be continued even if it must be supported by state and local school funds?

(1) ______Yes
(2) ______No

Part Three

advisory committee reactions

continue to function according to the original plans. The expertise of the Committee members, and the absolute necessity of continuing oversight of the Project by uninvolved specialists, were recognized by all parties, however. At the initiation of the Office of Education, arrangements were worked out so that the continuing activities of the National Advisory Committee would be supported out of the research funds granted to CEMREL, on the grounds that the Committee constituted an irreplacable source of independent expert judgment, especially upon the artistic and organizational aspects of the Project.

Subsequently, therefore, CEMREL provided funds for the site visits of Committee members, supported the writing of their reports upon their observations, and sponsored meetings of the Committee in the summers of 1968 and 1969. In no way, however, did the Committee ever become an adjunct to CEMREL's research operation, but continued to function as an independent advisory body, as it was originally constituted.

The Committee was most active during the 1968-69 season, the arrangements for CEMREL to assume support of the Committee having been made so late in 1967 that the Committee members could not begin making visits until the spring of 1968. During the 1969-70 season, of course, with only the Los Angeles site still in operation, fewer visits were made. For 1966-67 and 1967-68 the advisors' reports are presented in the order they were written, but for 1968-69, separate sections are devoted to reports on each site.

Each report received from a member of the Advisory Committee is acknowledged, quoted, or paraphrased in the account below. But no report or opinion (except the final one) is identified as coming from a particular Committee member. Further to preserve the anonymity of the Committee members, all feminine pronouns referring to an Advisor have been changed to masculine ones. At times, when the name of an informant being quoted is not especially pertinent, it has been deleted or replaced by an occupational identification.

The First Season in Rhode Island and New Orleans, 1966-67

The first visit to Rhode Island of which we have a report took place in January, 1967. The Advisory Committee member had seen several performances of Ah, Wilderness!, talked with educators, members of the Trinity Square Company and its Board of Directors, and observed classes in a Providence high school. He reported that Ah, Wilderness! was "beautifully staged and well performed," he praised Adrian Hall's talents and the strength of the commitment of Trinity Square's Board. "The greatest problem," he continued,

> seems to be in coordination and cooperation between the school personnel and the theatre program....Some teachers think that neither theatre people nor administrators really understand their problems....They want to be consulted and recognized.

REACTIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY THEATRE PROJECT

A National Advisory Committee to the Project was established at its inception. The Committee's members, representing the professional theatre, education, and "the public," were to visit the Project sites periodically, to meet annually to discuss the operation of the Project, and to make recommendations to the funding agencies, the research agency, and the Project officials in the various sites. The original members of this Committee were:

> Miss Adelaide Cherbonnier, a civic leader and a founder of the St. Louis Arts in Education Council;
>
> Mrs. Marcelle Felser, Artistic Director of the Vanguard Theatre Project in Pittsburgh;
>
> Mr. Bernard Tanner, English Department Chairman, Cubberly High School, Palo Alto, California;
>
> Dr. Jack Morrison, Dean of Fine Arts, Ohio University at Athens; and
>
> Mr. Wallace Smith, Director, Illinois State Demonstration Center for the Gifted in the Arts, Evanston, Illinois.

Mr. Tanner was later, at his request, dropped from the Committee and replaced by Mrs. Gladys Viedemanis, English Department Chairman, Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

During the first year of the Project's operation (1966-67), the reports of the Committee members on their site visits were submitted to Mr. Junius Eddy, the ELT Project Coordinator in the Arts and Humanities Division of the Office of Education. The first reports, copies of which were forwarded to CEMREL, were generally brief and tentative, quite naturally more concerned with constructive suggestions and speculations about the future than with evaluations of the program as they observed it in its infancy.

By the end of the first season, it was clear that funds were not going to be available in the Office of Education to allow the Committee to

> The students are generally enthusiastic, though some of this may be because of immediate reaction to being out of school and by a difference in their programs. They need this program....
>
> Theatre personnel seem to want a true theatre situation, but too many teachers I observed were trying to patrol the audience and keep them quiet. It had an "assembly" atmosphere.
>
> Many of the teachers were far more concerned with the "goodness" of the students' behavior than with anything else. One member of the acting company told me that early in the series many faculty took to sneaking into the lobby to smoke while the students watched the play. They stopped this by asking for faculty supervision.

The other members of the Advisory Committee chose not to submit separate reports on each site visit, but rather to wait to submit an overall, comparative report on the two sites. The first of these that was received rated the artistic quality of the Project in New Orleans as "excellent" and that of the Project in Rhode Island as "nearly satisfactory." The English teachers, this Advisor recommended, should be demanding a larger voice in the program, and they should initiate actions rather than waiting to be asked. He praised the qualifications of Miss Trusty, the Project Supervisor in New Orleans, and ventured the hope that Rhode Island could find someone as good to represent the educational end of their program.

On the matter of student deportment in the theatre, the Advisor found the situation in New Orleans "barely satisfactory" and that in Rhode Island "less than satisfactory." "Teachers, chiefly, are at fault, and the supervisors of the project are self-defeating in their romantic expectations...that theatre any more than music hath charms to soothe the savage."

The remainder of this Advisor's report went on to outline his ideas about the improvements that should be made in various areas--play selection, logistics, oversight, and so on--and to suggest some researchable questions of importance with which CEMREL might concern itself.

Another Advisor's report on his visits to the two sites during the first year of the Project found much to criticize in Rhode Island and much to praise in New Orleans:

> It was my observation that the major preoccupation in Providence--and to a lesser degree in New Orleans-- has been with the intention of the Project, the difficulties of the Project and confusion as to the aims and goals of

> the Project--all completely understandable because of the great problems inherent in an undertaking of this magnitude--but undeniably reductive of the high quality performance basic to the eventual successful implementation of the philosophy that inspired this program.
>
> In Providence, after attending two student matinees and one adult evening performance, my judgment was that the acting company was mediocre and the performances were reflecting badly the lack of directorial guidance and attention. A rehearsal that I saw of "Midsummer Night's Dream" (the director had left and an actor with some small directorial experience had taken over) gave me no encouragement.
>
> I attended a seminar directly after the student matinee when informal dialogue was invited between members of the cast and a small group of students and the questions posed by some of the students reflected an awareness of the uneven and, in some cases, poor performance.
>
> The comments of the audience during intermission of the evening performance were primarily negative--and they were right! There was comment as to the set which was a good, professional job--the costumes uninspired, but professional.
>
> The New Orleans situation was very different--the company stronger--the production had style and charm and reflected the strong hand of Stuart Vaughan and his direct involvement with the production. The costumes were superb.
>
> There were production problems concerning the set, but it was an imaginative and creative design that made the most of a difficult stage situation.
>
> The scheduled seminar in New Orleans was more formal. There was a brief question and answer period but it was not as revealing. This was done for the drama and speech classes.
>
> In both places, the school personnel to whom I talked spoke warmly of the strengths of the Project and had nothing to say about the calibre of performance.

The Advisor went on to suggest that the provision of "educational services requires rethinking." Might it not be better, he suggested, to spend the money now being used to get more literature into the schools to send troupes of actors into the schools? Further, he suggested, the fact that teachers so often chose to spend their time at the theatre in the lobby indicates that much more attention will have to be paid to involving teachers in the program and gaining their commitment to it.

The relations between Repertory Theatre, New Orleans, and the local community he warned, are dangerously weak, and a great deal of effort needs to be expended in strengthening the company's ties with the community. In Rhode Island, where the company was already established in the community, the problem seemed to be competition between the Theatre Project and the productions for the adult audiences, with members of the company resenting the effort diverted by student performances rather than recognizing "the enriching nature of the additional activity."

Still, he concluded,

> The achievements of the first year of operation have been vast. The unevenness of achievement in individual cases comes out of varying degrees of personnel competence rather than motivation. Hopefully, attention will swing away from the problems of simply making the plan operative and on to the high standards of achievement mandatory to making all aspects of the Project realize a proper potential.
>
> I hope that with the lessons learned in the past year, experimentation will go on in order to explore many avenues of approach and accumulate information with important implications for the use of other project designs elsewhere.

A third Advisor had some criticisms of the productions he had seen in both sites, and about the appropriateness for high school audiences of such plays as Three Sisters. He judged that the education program was working well, but notably more smoothly in New Orleans than in Rhode Island.

> There seemed to be no broad base of community support in either city. New Orleans is on the right track and will undoubtedly achieve this goal. In Providence it seems to be a matter of strengthening the present Board of Directors of the Trinity Square Playhouse.
>
> The implications for each of the cities now involved, after the three-year pilot operation, will be dependent upon the above--broad community support and involvement now. The schools seem so pleased with the program, there is little doubt that they would like to continue it, but their ability to generate future funding is indefinite, so the main burden must rest on the community. Another possibility might be the involvement of one of the universities in each city. It is imperative for the community leadership involved in the projects to start planning for the future now.

Still another Advisor made the following comments:

1. Quality of productions - We should have a much higher quality of production, but the level of production is strong enough to make the program effective. Design and execution of the design is very good. The directing is good and the costumes are fine. This was not missed by the student audience - in fact, it constitutes one of the main effects. It seems to me that primary efforts should be to hire increasingly better actors.

2. Relationship of the theater company to the educational program - Although there seems to be some variation from school to school, on the whole, this is effective, particularly in New Orleans. The Providence situation, from what I could see, is due to a personality conflict which highlights differences between the company and the people in the educational program. As the New Orleans project proves, this kind of conflict is not only unnecessary but absurd - not to be tolerated.

3. In neither case is there a broad base of community support. I do not believe this could be expected at first and must be a matter of development. In both cases efforts are being made, but so far the efforts have not been satisfactory. I say this, however, with the full understanding that the base for community support is in the performance itself and this must be established first. At this first level I feel the community relationship is basically good.

4. The implications of the program go far beyond itself. While these implications need time and study for identification, it is clear that having all of the students of the 10th, 11th and 12th grades see four live professional productions of classical plays in one year indicates a base for many changes in the attitudes of students, school and community at social, aesthetic and artistic levels. For example, the trade schools in both New Orleans and Providence were expected by many to reject the program. Quite the reverse. The students and the faculty and administrators in these schools now have a whole new base for discussing ideas and experiences. The experience for the third pilot operation alone is tremendously valuable in organizing the Los Angeles program. The excitement, the motivations for interest in school, life in general and the arts areas in particular are vast, and the school people are just becoming concerned with ways to underwrite this once the federal support is withdrawn.

> This will give you the general spirit of my response to the program. Basically I can say that my hopes for the program have been realized and are high enough to envision how effective it can be in specific learnings and general social learnings when the program increases its quality and coverage.

The author of the last report of the 1966-67 season can only bring himself to say that, artistically, the work in the two sites was "better than most non-professional work I have seen." Still, he continued,

> It seems to me that when one is performing for an audience that has never seen anything by which to compare the work they see that one could fall into the trap of doing sloppy work. I was not of the impression that such was the case in either of the two sites visited. The school audiences I saw and talked with were attentive and appreciative and expressed their desire for more plays. It seems to me that the work would have suited adult audiences very well. I do not think that it is necessary to have great stars playing the roles because they do not make that much difference to the high school audiences who see the plays beyond the glamour or publicity factors. In my experience as a teacher, younger people often have a rapport with students that catches them up in the work at hand. A good young company of performers can do the same thing. When the young people are accompanied by competent older actors, as these companies were constituted, the result is very good work.
>
> It seemed to me that there was not as much rapport between school people and theatre as I would like to see in either Providence or New Orleans. There was the common teacher feeling that he was being used and put upon by administration and people in higher echelons or with better connections. In both cities the teachers expressed appreciation for the theatres and told how much benefit for the students existed in the programs. However, many of the teachers spent time smoking in the lobbies and in telling me how much work it took to get all the kids down to the theatre and how it interrupted their schedules....
>
> The classwork that I saw seemed to be concerned with getting a great deal of cognition about the plays down the students. Many of the teachers did not seem to understand theatre art at all, but seemed to regard it as a kind of necessity to act out the script, which was the real object of all this, anyway.

> Some means of getting teachers and actors involved together in the Project would help it a great deal. There seems to be reluctance on both sides to accept the other, and what has to be done in each case. Once the two groups actually get together differences seem to be less than were imagined.
>
> Materials prepared by the personnel of the theatre in cooperation with the school personnel seem to be better than materials commercially available for the designated content. They seem to reach the student more directly, if locally produced, but the actual effect depends upon the teacher and his manner and method of presentation. The teachers have to be reached, somehow.
>
> Most of the teachers have almost no concept of the actual art of theatre. They seem inclined to look at it as mere literature performed. This attitude is likely to warp, if not stunt the involvement of students because it is likely to stress verbal materials and elements inordinately and to cause concentration upon parts of theatre that make it distasteful, or at the most optimistic, less appealing to many students, especially disadvantaged youngsters. The theatre project must not seem to be an extension of a classroom in atmosphere or content, if the greatest benefit from the work is to be achieved.
>
> While cooperating with the schools and the teachers, if real pioneering is to take place, the theatre must feel strongly supported enough to be willing to stick to its own guns when it comes to basic matters of theatre. This depends upon the personnel chosen to be liaison on both sides between theatre and schools.

The 1967-68 Season in Rhode Island, New Orleans, and Los Angeles

The first site visit report received during the 1967-68 season dated February, dealt with the Project in Los Angeles, which by then was in the midst of its first year of operation and still trying to recover from the chaos attendant upon the hostile reception of its first production, Tartuffe. The Advisor reported he had seen The Sea Gull with an all-black audience from "one of the roughest schools in the city." "It was excellent....And Chekhov came alive."

He praised the whole production, admitted that doubts that had been expressed about the wisdom of doing the play so early in the program were legitimate, but insisted that "the play and the performance came through."

> There is no question in my mind but what the audience did get the intentions of the playwright, the director, the designer, and the actors....And one of the finest things I've seen in terms of audience education developed in the discussion of the play after the performance....The company is fine, just fine.

The other Advisory Committee reports for the year cover visits made during the spring of 1968. The earliest of these contained these observations on the Project in New Orleans:

> I would rate the production of Tartuffe which I saw as competent, with some brilliant spots. Most impressive was the behavior of the audience. The students were obviously dressed "for the theater" and prepared for the play they were to see. I noted some students following lines in their personal texts. Despite the rather lengthy and wordy exposition of Act I, students maintained generally good attention and invariably anticipated laugh lines, e.g., "Tartuffified." The seduction scene brought down the house. The audience was obviously aware of the conventions of the Comedy of Manners and perceptively receptive to farcical and satirical situations on stage.
>
> The curriculum materials I examined were outstanding. Miss Trusty has demonstrated creativity and admirable scholarship in compiling the drama packets.
>
> My major suggestion is that the packets need one additional item: a suggested outline of classroom activities and assignments. Faced with such wealth as these packets now contain, far too many teachers are unable to block out a sequence of activities or devise effective questions about the plays or meaningful follow-up assignments. Given some model classroom outlines, teachers can freely adapt, not just mechanically adopt.
>
> Miss Trusty's work with teachers in the community strikes me as enlightened and brilliant. She has tried various ways of involving numerous teachers in workshops and orientation sessions, and she also has very sound plans for summer institutes for local teachers. Most important, she knows the community intimately because of her eight years of teaching and thereby is able to handle various schools and personnel on a very personal and differentiated basis. She also knows how to tap local talent and interest. Further, she is not so wedded to a single idea that she cannot alter approaches and materials as needed.
>
> For me, the most exciting aspect of the entire project is the whole curriculum vision being implemented: (1) the use of 4 new plays each year, which become or supplement

> the curriculum; (2) the insistence that drama be given its fair share in the total program (for it has been the stepchild always in most schools); (3) the acknowledgement that drama should be valued both in written and live form; (4) the integration of drama in the total Humanities program.

This same Advisor then visited the Project in Los Angeles. "I have never seen a completely integrated theatre company before," he began, "and I was greatly impressed by how successfully the group has provided acting opportunities to individuals of diverse racial and economic backgrounds." The Advisor judged that the company was on the verge of overcoming the handicap of poor relationships with the schools resulting from the first play. He praised the excellence of the teaching of the plays in the classrooms he had visited: "Here, of course, is the real pay-off of the entire program." He further praised the capabilities of Dr. Stern and Mr. Gass, the Project's Coordinator and Curriculum Consultant, respectively, but then moved on to some critical observations.

He found the acting in A Midsummer Night's Dream uneven and the production "amateurish." ("But the kids just loved the production!") He criticized the ICRC for failing to maintain "a real repertory company," with continuity of personnel from production to production. He found the curriculum materials prepared for the Project "solid...but bland," and urged that the practice of distributing classroom sets of plays be replaced by a system of providing personal copies to all students.

Further criticisms were made of certain Project arrangements; these included the imposition upon English Department chairmen of the burden of scheduling the theatre visits; the failure to "pierce the indifference of busy, frequently unimaginative principals, most of whom consider the Project just another disruption of the school day"; the inadequate involvement of teachers in the Project; the parental permission requirement which prevented some students from attending; and, finally, what the Advisor perceived as a failure to penetrate the "iron wall of tradition and curricular inflexibility" characterizing the Los Angeles schools.

Another Advisor, in visiting New Orleans, found that the harmonious cooperation between schools and theatre, which everyone had praised in the first season, was starting to come apart. He suspected that the sort of conflict of interests he saw developing was endemic to the Project itself, and discussed the matter at length.

> There is a problem existing in the New Orleans Project that may be inherent in the conception of the plan, and may well have other kinds of manifestation in the other cities. In New Orleans, it has erupted through the organizational set-up and has become a personality conflict between Mr. Vaughn and Miss Trusty, the two leaders of the separate branches.

Roughly, one might say that the problem centers in the goals held by theatre artists as against the general goals held by educators. The goals of the theatre company would seem to be to establish a true theatre in New Orleans, and to make the theatre experience the best possible. This means including the audience as against doing performances for an audience. It means that their concentration is on the artistic experience as being the ultimate.

On the other hand, the goals of educators are more likely those of culturization, the making of better citizens, and the enrichment of students' lives through theatre as an educational tool. While theatre people regard theatre as an end in itself, educators may regard it as a medium for teaching other content. Even where rather advanced theatre programs exist in education, there are only a few educators who have begun to see the arts as having values of their own. Few of them recognize that different behaviors are being sought and taught in arts education than those existing in traditional study.

While the two sets of goals are not mutually exclusive, lack of understanding of the differences in view could bring disaster.

Mr. Vaughan expressed his concern for creating a real theatre and making a real company out of his group. He does have some responsibility in establishing a going theatre in New Orleans beyond the time when federal money carries him. A real theatre means adult support through attendance and financial support. It also means an opportunity for the company to work in concert with an adult audience. Mr. Vaughan has a good point when he shows that five out of eight performances his people give are for a special audience, at a special time, in special circumstances. He believes that the student audiences are so narrowly oriented and directed that they are not actually having a true theatre experience and that this is damaging to the development of the performers as well.

The other partner in the project is the educational system with a sincere regard for theatre as they understand it, for the students and for the investment of time and money. In the two Louisiana systems involved, visits would indicate that the view-point is quite conservative and the view of theatre beyond a means of expansion of existing content has only insignificant influence on the cooperation and interest of the teachers and administrators. Both public and Catholic schools separate the sexes into separate schools in many cases, and they keep them separated in the theatre.

The concern of the teachers is with behavior of students while in attendance and with content as represented by the script.

Both students and teachers seem generally interested in the project. They indicate some interest in becoming theatre goers beyond what is provided by the Educational Laboratory Theatre. Their study is primarily concentrated on the script and its implications in character analysis and motivations.

There is almost nothing done with theatre as an art or as an aesthetic experience. It would seem from information gathered from observation, conversations with teachers, reports of both the theatre company and of the educational staff, and incidents like having the nuns walk out of a performance, that the teachers are not capable of handling any preparation of students in a theatre art sense.

Because of the influence of the educational side in the choice of plays, and because Mr. Vaughan seems to feel that he and the company have made many concessions to the educational program work for two years, they are in the position of having compromised so much that they are bringing theatre neither to students nor to the community.

Miss Trusty seems to understand this point of view and the fact that the situation is not as good for theatre as it should be, but she also represents the school system and feels that it is important to keep administrators and teachers interested in the project by providing them with the kind of thing they believe valuable. While Mr. Vaughan feels that the packets sent to the schools are not needed, Miss Trusty feels that the teachers would have no idea how to prepare the students for the trip to the actual show without such helps. In choice of plays, the educational branch feels much stronger and likely to make a voice heard because the script area is where most teachers feel they know something.

Conflicts of this sort seem almost inevitable to me when a professional theatre company ties in with an educational system. There is so little understanding of theatre viewpoint among educators. Certainly, there is little understanding of educational viewpoint among theatre people, but since education wants to deal with the art, it becomes necessary to discover what ideas and behaviors are incipient in the art if it is to be taught. Under these circumstances, it is to be wondered why the real facing of the situation was delayed for two years. The people must have tried hard to do a good job.

It seems to me that the theatre company needs some opportunity to work beyond the school requirements and to more firmly establish itself in the community.

The Advisor then went on to make some comments of a more general sort: the Theatre Company was "adequate," but not "brilliant;" the actors definitely played differently (more broadly) for student than for adult audiences; the production of Tartuffe "must have been very satisfactory to the more conservative teachers in the audience"; the sexes were segregated in the audience (boys in the balcony), and this created problems.

The community was becoming aware of the Repertory Theatre, he continued, and he had heard reports that unusual numbers of young people were showing up at community theatres to work on crews. There was, he further reported, not much understanding of what CEMREL was supposed to be doing and hostility to CEMREL's trying to develop curriculum materials to help teachers prepare students for the theatre ("That is not their job!").

He concluded by suggesting that the Theatre be given more of a chance to work for adult audiences; that the mass of the curriculum materials sent to teachers be greatly reduced ("otherwise they will give it all to their students"); that someone more clearly define the jobs and authority of the persons involved in the Project, "although it may already be too late"; and that CEMREL should try harder to explain its function.

Another member of the Committee also visited New Orleans within a few weeks of the Advisor whose report was summarized above. The Advisor also had seen Tartuffe, and his report began:

> Stuart Vaughan is a dedicated traditionalist and can be counted on to interpret a play in an orthodox manner. This production reflects the high quality credentials that Mr. Vaughan brings to theater--both as an academician and professional practicioner in his craft. The acting company has an evenness of 'weight' on stage that reflects the specific criteria that Mr. Vaughan uses in hiring ("old pros and English trained!"). As in any company there are varying degrees of personal competence, but the overall result is one of a professional, accomplished company performing competently within the context of a clearly defined production scheme.
>
> I can assess the "soundness of the director's conception" if we agree that nowhere is there a platonic conception of Tartuffe against which all Tartuffe's can be judged. Mr. Vaughan's Tartuffe is a bright social satire, a polished comedy of manners. For me this approach is sound because all of the elements of production and performance come out of an unity of interpretation--and create a whole that has integrity and does not violate the content of the play....

> In evaluating the entire production, I would say that it is a valid, professional production of Tartuffe that illuminates both the art and craft of the theater. I would further say that this Tartuffe is competent rather than inspired--illustrative rather than revealing--that, in the last analysis, it has integrity rather than excitement.

The report went on to commend Mr. Vaughan's talents in the most flattering terms, to discuss the shortcomings of the Civic Theatre in which the Company played, and to express the hope that a more suitable building would eventually be found in which to house the Project and the Theatre which would serve the community. The Advisor then moved on to the educational aspects of the Project.

> For good and substantial reasons 'theater' has traditionally been taught to the high school student, but always as if it were literature (or, more recently, a film or a record). The theater is a performing, interactive art form. Isolating the literature of theater from all its other essential elements has alienated potential audiences and prevented young people from seeking out this cultural experience which is educational as well as enriching. The special value for the young adult is that the theater can communicate social concepts and human problems--seen graphically through the behavior of live human beings with whom they can identify, from whom some measure of insight can be gained.
>
> I believe that the teacher must be educated to a greater understanding of theater art in order to properly prepare the student for the acrobatics and exercises of the eye, ear, mind and imagination required for better appreciation of theater performance. The study packets are superb research and study guides, but they tend to reinforce the approach to theater as literature. I continue to suggest that the theater company itself should be performing short, particularly designed productions in the high school auditorium with the objective of teaching the teachers and students alike and preparing them to understand the many dimensions of this particular artistic experience.

In a second section of the report, the Advisor summarized a series of interviews with administrators of the Repertory Company, teachers, and members of the theatre board. The personality and school-theatre conflicts touched upon in the previous Advisor's report were dealt with at greater length. It was becoming clear, the Advisor suggested, that the tying down of the Project to the English curriculum was being revealed as a primary source of the problems plaguing the Project--it lay behind the "play selection" disputes and it was purported to give the Theatre an "educational" image that turned off potential adult subscribers. Even within the educational system, the curricular emphasis was causing trouble. The students like plays such as Charley's Aunt; "Why don't we have more like that?" asked teachers. "Because we have to teach them," came the answer, "so the play choice must start with good dramatic literature."

The Advisor attended a meeting of a panel of teachers who were discussing play selection.

> One teacher stated that 80,000 hours have been spent on "repertory" theater, in preparation required by the study packets, coming and going, seeing the play--and that this was out of all proportion to the amount of time to be spent on dramatic literature. Another teacher stated that the program is forced on them, too many classroom hours are required away from the objectives of class responsibility, too much manipulation of the curriculum by the type of play chosen by the Project. Another teacher stated that the policy of his school was to teach in-depth any particular program (production) that fitted in with curriculum requirement. If it did not, then they approached it superficially. General complaints ranged from "Repertoryed to death", study kits alienating teachers who feel it implies requirement to teach in-depth in the classroom, too many extra-curricular panels and workshops for teachers. This was followed by strong praise given to the study packets, all commenting on their high level, the suggestion that workshops and panels come out of individual parishes and not be super-imposed from the top. They all spoke strongly of their own enthusiasm for the Project, but felt that the enthusiasm is not communicated down to other teachers who are apathetic and lethargic due to lack of information and inspiration.

The teachers suggested, among other things, that attendance at the plays be voluntary, that there be three plays instead of four, and that CEMREL's report should be sent to all schools, since this might help to convince educators of the value of the Project.

"My general impression," wrote the Advisor, of the teachers at the meeting,

> is that their attitudes toward theatre are very provincial and that their experience is very limited. Many have the idea that the intention of the Project is to provide a kind of recreational experience for the students. Miss Trusty was very upset by the general lack of understanding within the group, the negative attitudes, as well as the diametrically opposite suggestions that tend to destruct each other.

> I felt that there was a very positive acceptance and enthusiasm for the Project, but here again it came to them so large, so fully-grown that there is a confusion as to what is to be accomplished by it--a feeling of displacement on the part of teachers who are unaccustomed to the flexibility demanded by such a project--a general separation of attitudes according to the specific personality of the teacher and/or the Parish he represented.

Then the "play selection" problem was returned to, as the most immediate source of the conflicts that were afflicting the Project.

> My next meeting was with Miss Trusty, where the great problem of 'play choice' was again discussed with passion. Here a major conflict of personalities and intentions was illuminated. Miss Trusty feels that since the major financial support for the Project stems from the Office of Education, she, as representative of the educational community, must have a very definite voice in the selection of material. The choice of next year's plays had occasioned much tension between herself and Mr. Vaughan. I find Miss Trusty to be very competent, imaginative, skillful and creative in her approach to her job. She is excited by the workshops that she has created for the particularly motivated students in high school, apart and separate from the work of the theater itself....
>
> The following day I attended the performance, after which I had a meeting with Mr. Vaughan. During the 'mingling' that had gone on the night before, Mr. Vaughan and Miss Trusty had a very bitter confrontation on the subject of her interference in the theater. It is his contention that he and he alone must have final say on play selection. Ostensibly Mr. Vaughan is not going to produce controversial plays or pornographic plays, etc.--but, for example, it is his great desire to include Sea Gull in next year's season. Miss Trusty has decided that this is not appropriate to the high school student. Mr. Vaughan feels that his is the experience, background, etc. that should be operative. There is confusion as to whose needs are to have the first priority in this Project--plus the unique fact of the New Orleans Project that is just beginning activity on behalf of an adult community in which the director is free to make choices based on his own knowledge of theater, so the educational requirement has enormous weight and the director feels 'hemmed in.'

Then the Advisor reported on an interview with an active member of the Theatre's board, who suggested that, to recover lost adult subscriptions and attract new ones, (1) the programming must be changed to emphasize adult tastes, (2) a home must be purchased for the Company, (3) more publicity from Washington about the national implications of the ELT Project must be fed into the community, and (4) information and assistance from the funding agencies about the fourth and succeeding years must be forthcoming.

The long report was concluded in this way:

> What must not be overlooked, is the great accomplishment in New Orleans in the face of enormous difficulties. This is due to the competence and excellence of the people involved in the implementation of their own jobs day in and day out.
>
> The objectives of the total project are not understood. There is a completely different set of criteria being used by each of these people in order to evaluate the success of what they are doing, to create their own objectives for the future.
>
> I would strongly urge all of the top personnel of the three theater projects be brought together, also members of CEMREL and the administrators of the project in Washington, so that there is a pooling of knowledge and insight, a clarification of objectives in the light of pragmatic experience in the field, and a mutual effort to make the third year the beneficiary of cumulative effort and wisdom.
>
> Education depends heavily on the ability to communicate--the theater is a communicating art form. Let us hope together that the Educational Laboratory Theater Project properly uses dialogue and intercommunication to understand itself.

Late in the spring of 1968, four of the Advisors visited and submitted reports on Project Discovery in Rhode Island. The first of these is quoted at some length below.

> The company was not only proficient in the sense that the acting was skillful, but the company has been together long enough to have established a true ensemble style. They play together. They act as if they trust each other.
>
> The audience with which I saw An Enemy of the People had a better time than the audience I saw last year in this theatre. The teachers let them alone more. There was a little talking, but that I heard was about the play. Since boys are more likely to feel dragged to the theatre than girls, I spend a good deal of time talking to them. They said they enjoyed Ibsen's play better than any they had seen this year. The boys seem to identify with the

"anti-hero," Dr. Stockman, as one of the actors described him. The girls also indicated that they liked the play.

Several senior boys and one junior told me that they had come to see the evening performances for adults and had brought dates, and two had urged their parents to come. The parents had come.

Because of the obvious physical and vocal reaction, it is clear that the audience knows the actors and responds to them. This was not true last year. The lead in Enemy has been going out to the high school to help in choreography and action for some of their performances. Bob Colonna was identified by the audience as the actor who played "The Wall" in Midsummer Night's Dream last year, and his line in Enemy about standing with Stockman "like a wall," brought down half the house. This was explained to me by one of the students.

There were groups who rose to give an ovation to the cast at the close of the performance. This was spontaneous and unexpected by the actors, but the whole ensemble of the players seems to reach out and grasp the audience in this theatre. The students feel a part of "our theatre," and will so designate it. This feeling is due to the atmosphere the company seems to have created. The kids in attendance were involved. This varied with individuals, but numbers of boys, especially, who began by sitting on the backs of their necks were leaning forward with their arms on their knees in the third act and at the end of the play.

One of the girls told me that some students will stay home from school or go off somewhere else on the days that they know the school is attending Trinity Square. But this group is smaller this year than last year. They like it better, and the students who go seem to return with reports of a good time.

I believe that this company is on sound ground. They were in operation with the schools before the federal money arrived, and therefore, they have an interest in work with the schools. The director spent some hours in the afternoon working with the Rhode Show group that goes out to the schools, working in classrooms, doing some songs from Three Penny Opera, some bits from Spoon River Anthology, and a good theatrical performance of The Marriage Proposal. These last two are done so often in high school contests that it was enlightening and refreshing to see what mature professionals can make of this little script. The actors and director are interested in doing this. They seem to get artistic rewards from it.

The Providence program seems to have some go to it. It seems to be working well with the schools. Student reaction would seem to indicate that some kind of impact is being made.

Here are some statements that may indicate some of the features that work for Trinity Square:

a. The company is indigenous in Providence. It was working there before Project Discovery aided its work in schools.

b. The company has become an ensemble. Many of them have worked together before, and the director is able to bring this spirit to the company.

c. The company as a whole, and apparently individually, is interested, involved, and is developing a school program.

d. The company has an opportunity to offer plays in addition to those performed for the schools in its own theatre and for a general audience. This increases experience for the actors, makes the company a true theatre of a real community, and expands the kinds of scripts that are available to the group.

e. Miss Vallely does not consider herself a theatre expert. She listens and works with Mr. Cumming very well, doing a very, very excellent job of seeing the right school officials in each system, and making the educators feel secure and a part of all this by doing the above in their own teacher's language. The roles of theatre representative on the educational team, and educational representative on the theatre team are clear because of these two people, and conflicts have been reduced.

f. The packets for teachers are simpler than those in New Orleans, and therefore more likely to be usable to more teachers. This simplicity is also likely to assure a more generally even level of preparation from all schools. Miss Vallely's outlines are very good, and again represent something teachers can use because they are done by a person trained in education. They utilize strong, but simple materials provided by Mr. Cumming.

> g. The CEMREL summer workshop and continued contact with the educators by the educational team and by members of the company itself seems to have greatly altered the teacher attitude I felt was detrimental last year.
>
> The general warmth of this project makes it hard to find some elements that might be improved.
>
> This gang seemed to be on pretty solid ground.

The next Advisor to visit Providence was equally impressed by the apparent complete metamorphosis that had taken place in Rhode Island in a year's time, from the confusion and friction of the first year to the routine excellence and general enthusiasm of the second. "Without a doubt," the Advisor began, "the Trinity Square players are the most outstandingly professional I have seen in the three cities. The productions were superb, artistically sophisticated, and polished in every way."

> What is immediately evident to any observer is the very excellent working relationship between Miss Vallely, Mr. Cumming, and Mr. Hall. The three constitute a highly talented, happily compatible team....What is most encouraging is that all of these people are genuinely committed to bringing theatre and young people together--and all are intelligent, sensitive, unsnobbish individuals. This kind of combination is surely first rate.

The report went on to praise Miss Vallely's success in winning over the school administrators and department chairmen to active support of the Project: "Everyone with whom I spoke commended her work, noting it was she who made the total operation 'work' in every sense of the word. I concur."

The Advisor commented upon the unusual pressures that the 9:00 A.M. performances put on the acting company and expressed the hope that something better would eventually be worked out. And he criticized the Project Discovery practice of giving only a few "classroom sets" of play scripts to the schools. "I am inclined to agree with Shirley Trusty that all students should receive copies of the plays, even though some copies may never be read." He also suggested that the schools should give more attention to the "sequence of experiences" in the Project, so that, for example, tenth grade teachers would stress certain aspects of the theatre experiences, teachers of higher grades would stress others. Still, the Advisor went on, the acting company itself is the key to the Project's success or failure:

> The Trinity players can make the Project work by virtue of their own excellence and integrity. The New Orleans

> company is competent, but not exceptional. The Los Angeles troupe is in severe trouble. The Project can work only if the dramatic company is worth support.

The third Advisor to visit Rhode Island began his report with an explicit contrast between what he found on his visit and what he had found the previous year.

> Towards the end of spring of 1967, I visited Project Discovery in Providence. I found that the Project was operating and operating effectively as far as the encounter with live theater by the high school children was concerned. But the problems--particularly over choosing plays and operating the business side of the organization--were so bad as being close to hopeless. The contrast of this picture with what I found in May of 1968, one year later, was unbelievable. I frankly said, "There must be something wrong - what is it?" Other than the continuing efforts to up-grade the company and to install a more effective managing director, the facts were that the year was extremely successful. Adrian Hall said, "I think we must have run through all the mistakes the first year." The students, teachers and administrators were happy and excited about the productions, Trinity Square Players respected the schools, and with a string of hits, the Company was successful artistically and financially....
>
> In visiting classrooms and talking to teachers, I was most taken by the discovery on the part of the teachers that Project Discovery was changing and amplifying curricular materials and the curriculum itself. Now the teachers did not see Project Discovery as an instrument designed to change their curriculum. It was simply that the revelation of what could be done more interestingly--and better--became apparent to them. The discovery was theirs. For example, one said, "You know, Tenth Grade was always Julius Caesar. Well-- there's a lot more we can do than that!"...
>
> Perhaps the most pleasant development this year is the presence of mutual respect and admiration between the schools and the Trinity Square Company. The Project is a success, and they all "own" it. The fundamental factor here, of course, is that the shows work and the students respond. But, in addition to this is the matter of key personnel working in the interests of the Project. Rose Valley's contribution this year has been very effective--especially in that delicate relationship with the principals. The improvement over last year is striking. Cumming has continuously contributed to this development, too. Both of these positions could be the source of serious

> devisiveness on a personality basis alone. Future projects should note this point and screen candidates with great care.

The reactions of the last Advisor to visit Rhode Island were equally flattering to the Project and to the people who were making it go.

> This Project is working so well that it must be evaluated carefully in all of its aspects as well as in the particular production of Enemy of the People. First, an editorial opinion--the Theater cannot make a contribution to Education unless it exists within its own disciplines, for its own reasons, created by its own practitioners.
>
> Adrian Hall went into Rhode Island and created a theater. He has no peripatetic, hit-and-run notions. This is his commitment. He also happens to be a very talented, tasteful Creative Director. Last year, when all kinds of theater approaches were patch-worked together and overlaid upon Mr. Hall's ideology, the results were, of course, an uneven patch-work of achievement and failure! This year his record of accomplishment is highly visible. The source of all creation in a theater (if creation is to continue to escalate) must be the Creative Director. The Theater is a collaborative Art Form and to the end that all the collaborative specialists are talented, the end result is more and more remarkable, but it is Mr. Hall's ability that essentially created a theater that can nourish education, the community, anything it comes into contact with! It is his stubborn insistence on working in his own way, for instance, that makes him insist on discarding the 'star system' in favor of working with a Repertory Company, and he has created a true company of actors. This is the way classic theater can be performed--by a company of people who work together and create a style together--all responding to the same philosophy of approach and motivation....
>
> The inter-action between Theater and School is going on at many levels. First let us say that Rose Valley, who coordinates the Theater and School activity, is very good at her job. She works well with Richard Cumming and herein lies what can be most important to understand and study. These two people, one representing the school point of view and objectives, and one representing the theater point of view and objectives, working together daily for all problem solving and structure design--this is not happening anywhere else. In Los Angeles two people from the school system are working together, and I suggest that neither of them really knows a damn thing about professional theater. In New Orleans Shirley Trusty works

> alone and certainly cannot have the daily ear of Stuart Vaughan, so these two strong and talented people work at cross purposes.

The Advisor reviewed the other activities which had been supplementing the plays themselves--"Rhode Show," the acting and directing workshops--and remarked that such activity, rather than diverting the acting company, "enriches and expands" it. The report concluded with the observation that, after "long, very candid and private discussions" with all of the principal figures in the Project, the author had found it

> unmistakably clear that all of these people are respectful of each other's expertise and all are working with a common purpose which is to create the best damn theatre possible--and to respect the requirements of their audiences, student and adult alike.
>
> It is my hope that every possible reinforcement, financial and otherwise, be given to this group.
>
> Each new aspect of Project Discovery activity needs development and strengthening and everyone involved knows it. They are all seeking and soaking up as much help, advice, and information as possible. They need the freedom to make choices and the possibility of funding for individual small project plans. It is inconceivable to me that the total project carrying in each instance over a half million dollars a year price tag can be translated in toto to any other area--but these spin-offs deserve attention as holding a key for other areas.
>
> I am convinced that whatever does or does not happen anywhere else, this project in Providence will validate the entire ELT experiment.

The 1968-69 Season in Rhode Island, New Orleans, and Los Angeles

Rhode Island

Fewer visits were scheduled to Rhode Island than to the other sites because it was the consensus of the Advisory Committee that the Project in Rhode Island had successfully worked out its major problems during the preceding year, that the Trinity Square company was presenting consistently superior theatre, and that, with the extremely busy schedules of all of the Committee members, it would be more profitable to concentrate on the sites which were still struggling with problems that had been solved in Rhode Island. Coverage of the season's productions in Rhode Island is therefore quite incomplete in this section of the report.

Two visits were made to Rhode Island in the fall and one late in the spring. The first report, dated late October, dealt with O'Casey's Red Roses for Me ("a fine production") and with student response to it.

> The students, as I read them, identified thoroughly with Ayamon and Sheila and the forces of the play. The artistic experience they encountered hit them and humanized them so effectively that I cried....The hand at the final curtain burst like a sharp crack of thunder.
>
> I have not sat in a classroom and had that experience, that humanizing experience, anywhere else. In the name of cost efficiency who else and how else could it be duplicated? I've been hortatory in these remarks--but they are not without their heuristic value. There are, at least, some behavioral facts: I cried, the students responded, with laughs, hushed attention, spontaneous applause. One of the great writers of the English language held their direct attention for 2½ hours. But this does not deliver the sense I felt of an involved audience moving with the forces of the play and its import as it developed. I've spent the bulk of my life dealing with performance in the theater, and from a professional point-of-view my senses are skilled in reacting to an audience. I have never felt one more involved, more understanding.
>
> In short, I can report professionally--with the best of my clinical judgment--that those students this morning directly, consciously and skillfully encountered a humanizing experience.
>
> The adult performance was well done, but it did not have the vibrant excitement the student performance had. I think this was due solely to the quality brought to the performance by the students. The adults did not identify, it seemed to me, with the all-out empathy that the students brought to the event. The final hand at the last act curtain, for example, was ok but curiously "proper."

The report then moved to a summary of a one hour interview with a Rhode Island school superintendent who had been a strong exponent of the Project since its beginning. The interview is worth quoting at length.

> Its [Project Discovery's] cultural value is there; it can be felt, it can be seen, it can be heard, it can be sensed. I'm particularly happy about this because I was hoping that if this proved out well other aspects of the cultural arts could be dealt with in the same manner. Our country could see some real value in this. We couldn't possibly recruit as a local unit what Project Discovery makes possible. I'm convinced that there is a great, great value in this project.

I feel deeply about a humanizing experience. This humanizing experience does not occur enough in our society. This [Project Discovery] tells on our society later on--it makes the people into human beings.

I want it to happen in art and music. I'm wondering if the cultural arts ought not to be something more than extra-curricular. We're suffering in our general population sociologically from this.

Do I think the cost is out of line? I have no basis for answering this. What's the per pupil cost? The cost is $650.00 per student in our district.* But this $650.00 barely touches the humanizing experience. The status quo isn't delivering--Project Discovery is. $650.00 does not include the kind of an educational experience these children are able to get through this other school [Project Discovery School]. It costs more.

We have 20 teachers of English and Literature. This is an experience they want teachers to have. 80-90% of the students chose to take it. The workshop was over-subscribed. The staff is happy about it. The only problem comes in the logistics.

In the last discussion I participated in with other superintendents throughout the state (last May), we found that the '68-'69 school budget was less generous in funding. They showed their predeliction for the project. What can we do to keep it on as much of an even keel as possible? Maybe we ought to try and help with transportation. I gathered from their questions that they were ready to do what they could. We would like to do what we can under the limitations of budget. None were unhappy....

If this were in front of my School Committee, I would argue for this in terms of the fact that our children must have these humanizing experiences which we cannot do locally to the enriching kind of an extent that Project Discovery does. I can not speak for my colleagues, but I think the disposition is there because Project Discovery has been a marvelous experience for our children. I think every superintendent in the state would tell you this.

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* The reference, of course, is to the cost of the total school program in his district, not to the cost of the Project. The Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, by our calculation, cost about $27.00 per student per year.

> From the point of view of the participation of the children, there is enough evidence for us to indicate that it serves a very good purpose. Mr. R______ in the English Department says that there has been a greater awareness of this form of the spoken word. It makes the teachers more aware of this form of presentation--plays. The English Department is now aware of a multitude of vehicles that are available because they have been led into discovering the why of these plays? This sends them back to our literature. It makes the English teacher more competent in their fields than they were before Project Discovery was here. Teachers came back from the performance knowing they had an experience, a feeling they had never had before. If I've had an experience, I know it is real.

But, then, after his own and the superintendent's praise of the Project's effects, the advisor put his finger on the greatest single weakness of the Project to that date, a weakness that the Trinity Square Board of Trustees, belatedly, were just beginning to try to overcome.

> There is no one in the structure assigned or thoroughly qualified to put the bite on the school district for support next year when the federal money runs out. Everyone is properly concerned. They are thinking about it and taking steps to meet it. But no single, qualified person is assigned to this serious problem, repeat, serious problem. With other aspects of the project running so well, I'm afraid the problem is recognized but not met. Muddling through won't work. A definite proposal by the Company submitted well before budget time should be made by the right person....
>
> The speed at which it was necessary for OE and the Arts Endowment to initiate the Eduational Laboratory Theater Project did not allow for negotiating firm increments in local support. Nevertheless, in future negotiations, this should be a definite part of the commitment. Local support must be phased in as federal money is phased out.

He then more briefly remarked on a number of other aspects of the Project. Community knowledge of and respect for the company exists, but has not been capitalized on. The Trinity Square Repertory Company members are committed to the Project, take pride in being part of it, and are coming to enjoy playing to student audiences and working in the schools. Teacher attitudes range from good to excellent.

> Teachers in history, art, etc. are beginning to see how they can relate their work to the play profitably. I get the impression that this is beginning to catch on and is likely to grow.

Rhode Show--the travelling production of one-acts and excerpts--is popular and is paying off.

> The program--in the best sense--is established. It is not a crisis operation. Each member of the staff, teachers and students, know what Project Discovery is about and operate accordingly. This does not reduce the excitement of the event. Quite the other way around. The excitement is in the production, not the novelty of the idea, the bus trip, etc. This is a noticeable change from the previous years.

The second visit came about two weeks later, while Red Roses was still playing and Brother to Dragons was in rehearsal. This writer was less impressed with Adrian Hall's conception of the O'Casey play ("It neither scales the heights of wild Irish humor, nor plumbs the depths of melancholy, despair, and violent death, as is required for a true production of O'Casey's play"). Brother to Dragons was a different story:

> It is a brilliantly conceived theatre piece, created by the same director, and everyone in it...was marvelous....It is, I think, truly inspired and thrilling to watch.

"Of all the Laboratory Theatre sites," the writer generalized, after remarking on the importance of the theatrical product to the success of the Project, Rhode Island has

> the healthiest and most dedicated attitude toward the work with the students. As this attitude must stem from the top, it illuminates the respect and concern felt by all the administrators, theatre and educational, alike. The Acting Company as a whole has enormous feeling for the significance of student participation in the Project and the potentials, aims, and goals of the total experiment....They are deeply committed to Adrian Hall as an artistic leader, to Theatre as an art form, and to the interaction with and for students as a tremendously important trust, hope, and objective in itself. As would be expected, the resident company does represent varying degrees of talent and training, but the cohesive force that homogenizes them is their unity of purpose and dedication to their specific situation.

The next topic was the meetings that initiated the "Save Project Discovery" activities and outlined the plans for continuation of the Project in the 1969-70 season.

The report concluded:

> The Providence Project, I say once again, for me validates the total experiment. There has been the growth and dynamics one would hope for, and lessons to be learned for others to gain by. Obviously the total Project is only valuable as an activity to be analyzed and assessed. No other school

> system, I fear me, will for a long time have money available for anything but trying to keep afloat in a sea of proliferating problems. I am sure that it is never reasonable that education should have such a strong financial control over any theatre. But it has been a fascinating and valuable experience that illuminates many things about education as a total process, and the theatre as a catalyst. Trinity Square Theatre has had the artistic strength, the personnel, the appropriate motivation, it seems to me, to have overcome a great many obstacles that come out of the peculiar financial superstructure of the Project, and they have continued to explore off-shoot ideas themselves. Growth is, after all, the prime indication of the health of any institution.
>
> I would say that this group illuminates the whole process of project development beautifully: the first year of uncertainty, trauma and 'alarms and excursions'; the second year of clarification and growing sense of self, of proper perspective as to the appropriate roles that each person and, indeed, each institution must play - and the proper respect of each institution for the other; the development of new structures that are enriching the third year of activity, and the third year's recognition of year four's problems, without sacrificing the importance of the moment at hand...all of this clearly enough so that one might look at the total activity and make judgements as to what is to be gained by schools in the theatre -- theatre in the schools -- teachers and the care and training thereof for approaching culturally-oriented activity, etc., etc., etc., and the whole damn 'schmeer.'

The next Advisory Committee visit to Rhode Island did not come until late spring, during the run of Billy Budd. "Without doubt," it began,

> this is the best theatre of the three involved in the Project. The conception, direction, and completion of these in performance were superb. Billy Budd...is a piece of true theatre, conceived, written, composed, built, designed, acted, and participated in by the company of Providence and the Rhode Island audiences.
>
> The production is not wild nor outrageous. It is THEATRE. It is professional and it fits into the new ideas that are sweeping campuses and involving student attitudes everywhere. I do not mean that it is violent and militant, although it is. I mean that I was part of a performance in which two 17 year old escapees were brought back into the theatre by the police from an attempt to run off downtown to a pool hall. These kids were put down beside me and sat all the way through the short show with grins on their faces, delight in their eyes, and whistles on their lips when Bristol Molly passed within two feet of them.

> Actors turning a windlass in the midst of the audience, calls from the crow's nest above their heads, cannons fired in their faces, a flogging and a hanging among them produced a theatre effect that has not been seen since Elizabethan days. It cannot be done in films nor on television. The audience cannot smell the sweat of TV actors. The audience cannot be splashed by water sloshed on the fainting victim of a flogging in the movies. The audience cannot touch actors in the media as they pass among them, and the audience cannot offer to help the sailors turn the windlass as they work beside them.
>
> The use of Brechtian ideas like having the titles of scenes appear through the device of lowering the ship's sails before the scene and the inclusion of a pump organ on stage to provide music indicate the depth of understanding of the goals of the production by the designer, and his ability to work with the other artists of the company to make theatre.
>
> It is superb. It is relevant. It is contemporary. It is art. It is theatre. The kids know how to participate. They turn and look. They scream, when appropriate. They make cracks, when they should. Adults are somewhat confounded and will not twist to see what is happening behind them. They seem confused and shocked. The kids accept, for the most part, and if they have not been so biased by previous instruction or direction that they cannot accept what is done by Adrian Hall and company.

The report summarizes the writer's conversations with actors and confirms the previous writer's impression of the dedication of the actors both to Adrian Hall and to the student audiences. The report notes the feeling that the entire company--from director down to the office staff--function like a community, interacting with one another and exchanging ideas and excitement. The activities of various members of the company in the community were also noted: some were teaching acting, others running workshops, several were to teach in the Governor's School during the summer.

> To a man, they said that they would like to return to this exciting theatre next year as long as there was enough financial return to make it worthwhile. They look upon the TSRT as a stepping stone to a life in theatre, but they are willing to stay with Trinity Square as long as it progresses artistically and in the exciting way it has been. They feel that they are learning here, as well as having a chance to work in real theatre. They will not leave as long as they progress to the point where they have farther to go by remaining in the company than leaving it. It is more than _just_ a stepping stone to them.

> They spoke often of the workshops as important and also as definite parts of the theatre program. They seem to recognize their value and to have considerable empathy with the high school students and teachers involved. Older actors are not so kind about the interests and actions of high school students as the younger actors. It is more than age. It is more likely to be the difference between perceptions of theatre and its function, and the education of the performers. All, old and young, seem to like the innovations introduced by Adrian. I believe that this is his directorial talent coming to the fore here. He does not rule, as a director, he suggests. He listens. He sets up situations in which his people can contribute their special part. They all seem to feel part of a unit. They all seem to feel valuable.

And this report concluded:

> The company and the audience has progressed since I first saw it several years ago. This Billy Budd could not have been produced then. It would not have been received by audience and public as it is, dirty language and all. The kids don't bat an eye on some statements and it is forgotten in their interest in the theatrical happenings around them. They have become sophisticated in theatre going. The company is better than ever. It is more unified, more goal conscious, more confident about its future than any others. It is a solid artistic-business group. All of its people work for a common end. The artistic director plus a good business staff keeps it that way through his judicious choice in personnel and cast and by his ability to let all do their parts.

New Orleans

The tone and content of the Advisory Committee comments on the New Orleans Project differed sharply from the tone and content of their reports on Rhode Island. If all of the reports were to be summarized in a single phrase, it would have to be "profound dismay." The first site visit was in November. The premiere performance of Arms and the Man, which occurred during the visit, was attended by Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson and a number of other dignitaries. The production itself the advisor typified as "good, straight, almost stock quality"; and remarked on the vitality of student audiences seeing the play in contrast to the polite attention of the adult audiences.

The bulk of the rest of the report is devoted to quotations from and summaries of interviews conducted by the advisor with a variety of people involved in the project. An administrator on the Theatre Company staff made the following remarks:

> We look at this school program as a thing that's ended.... It's a fallacy to think it's going to continue....A fourth season built around the schools is impossible. We'll build a season of six plays, two of which the Orleans school board may make available to themselves. Curriculum dictating a theater is wrong, backwards. We have a less formal relation than the teachers and many of them have told us. "Oh God by the time we study this for five class periods, all the kick has been taken out of it." They would rather see the play and then discuss it. When they see the play it's the climax rather than just the beginning of it. We feel that over-curricularizing the play is bad.
>
> Our problem is that we are not selling tickets, and it's because people think we are too damned academic and too scholarly and we're all for the kids. The kids can't sell tickets to their parents. It's too damn tough and they tell us that. The parents say, I'm glad you're enjoying the theater but we didn't have it when we were in school so we missed it. And they take it like Algebra....How can I go to a play and understand it? Now that's a popular misconception. Too many people don't like our academic season, our choice of plays.
>
> We're trying like hell to tell them there is really no mental process involved in Arms and the Man. And there will be less involved in seeing Twelfth Night. We have to create a whole new image. We have an identity now, but we have an identity that is locked in with a lot of kids, too. We have to create an image that says professional theater is entertaining and you don't need a Bachelor of Arts degree to go to it. The very thing that gave us our life is the very thing that tends to smother us. Sending this many kids to a project like this is wrong. I don't think that you are honestly building a desire on the part of these youngsters for theater. You have created another course in the curriculum of their education. No great big desire....I think the theater was education, curriculum to them, and I don't think it was an enjoyable occasion that was a part of your social life.

The advisor commented that the theatre administrator "is not only completely at odds with the educational program but appears bent on substituting his data for any other data." The story he seems to be spreading, the writer said, is that "the federal government threw away $1,500,000 in New Orleans in a...fashion that destroyed the theatre in that city."

The second interview summarized in this report was with a well-known columnist on a local paper who had been a consistent supporter of the Project. It gave a quite different assessment of the Project.

> As far as I'm personally concerned I think the Repertory Theater has not only given us fine high class professional theater, but to me the greatest significance of this thing is what it has done for these kids....I know the educators involved are extremely happy with the situation. It's enriching youngsters with an art-form and it's also entertainment. It's also education they would never have. Forty-four thousand youngsters have been exposed to four plays. If it didn't draw customer one, this would be a tremendously cultural project at the educational level. I'm a great believer in the exposure theory. I've seen the maturity of these audiences growing. I've seen in two years they are seasoned theater-goers, they are showing maturity....
>
> As far as I'm concerned, there is not a single criticism to be made about the whole Repertory Theater Project except they ought to have full audiences for everyone of those 15 public performances. Those parents who know what is going on are bound to be impressed.

A third interview, with a school official, emphasized the growing acceptance of the program by school principals and teachers and the beneficial effects upon students. A fourth, with another school official, contained expressions of pessimism about the continuation of the Project, despite its acceptance and its successes, due to lack of community support for the theatre, to a "double standard" about federal and local expenditures on education, and to the weakness of the theatre's Board of Directors.

> The Project was not born normally. There never was the clamoring for it that should have been here first....It is too late now. Maybe in ten years from something of our own.
>
> From the school system's standpoint, for the kids who have been in the theatre, it has been a real good experience. It has been something worthwhile, but the foundation has not been effectively laid in the community.

The next interview was with the artistic director of Repertory Theatre, New Orleans, Stuart Vaughan. Mr. Vaughan expressed, in this interview, substantially the same reservations about and criticisms of the Project as in the statement which is printed elsewhere in this volume. The advisor's comment, at the end of his transcription of Vaughan's remarks, was this:

> The reader can readily see that the theater managers have developed a "line," a point-of-view about these situations

> and that wherever the "faults" lie, it's not in the theatre. These views are not shared by those in the educational program. The theater manager's views and the educational staff's views clearly do not converge, a serious hazard for all concerned. I think the situation is beyond repair, but all parties should be counseled to stick to their own competencies rather than waste energy in fault-finding....
>
> As a member of the Advisory Committee, I must emphasize the concern...that the management of the theater company appears to be selling short, perhaps even sabatoging, the whole concept and operation of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project in order to (A) defend against its own short-comings and (B) to enhance its prepared position for next year. I am not speaking against the reporting of negative findings. I'm speaking of what seems to be an irrational attack on the project, CEMREL, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Office of Education, the New Orleans Schools and so on. I suggest that both O. E. and the Endowment ask the Director for a frank report and to withhold further public comment on matters not within his competency.

Despite all its problems, the writer continued, returning to his own impressions of the situation, "there is a quantity of good will around the Project. It has worked." What is needed is to harness the good will, translate it into dollar support. But, "I met no one on the scene who has those skills or...is using them towards this end."

> One point is extremely clear--a base in the community before the theatre moves in should be established. Unless the community identifies with the Project and wants it, the chance for continued growth is minimized....
>
> A comparative study of Providence and New Orleans should be very revealing on this point....

The writer further observed that the actors were "convinced that the [student] audiences...this year are more 'mature, sophisticated' than they were three years ago."

> The report is that the teachers are relaxing, expecting the students to enjoy the show rather than to "make trouble." As this happens, the students get more of the show, enjoy it more and become better audiences. This, according to report, is particularly true of black audiences. They and their teachers were pretty up-tight about the whole setting the first year....Now they are much "looser" and more responsive to the performances.

Continuing on his track, the advisor suggested to CEMREL that

> special attention should be paid to the black students. The report is that they are flattered at being invited on the same

> basis as the white schools. But, to my knowledge, nothing has been done to see if the Project is having any special effect on ghetto schools. The cast has only one Negro actor. Maybe this is right for the New Orleans situation today, but I feel there is an unconscious desire not to notice that one half of the audience is black. I brought up the subject a number of times with different people, but it was disposed of in a brief statement and dropped....
>
> I must express a sense that I have that no one in the operation is really aware of the black community....I do not know the New Orleans temper on these matters, but I could get no response from anyone but the routine answers that the black schools were enjoying the productions and that they composed 50% of the audience. It seems to me that neither the theatre company nor the schools have responded to a situation in which some highly imaginative efforts should have been forthcoming.

The second member of the Advisory Committee to visit New Orleans did so in December. Arms and the Man was still playing, and this advisor was much less kind to it than the first had been.

> The most horrifying spectacle is that of the company of actors, who are neither believable, nor stylish, nor talking to each other, and almost every one of them clearly indicating that they think that they are either funny or adorable, and that is death on stage!...The company is very second rate and has capitulated in the worst possible way to the seduction of the laughs from the kids.

The writer's bewilderment at the production's being mounted at all ("What the hell was Stuart thinking of to have permitted this?") led to a suggestion that the production was symptomatic of what was wrong with the whole Project in New Orleans.

The rest of this writer's very long report deals with the theatre's difficulties with the schools and the community that the writer believes have so distracted the management of the theatre company that it no longer was doing what it was supposed to do--mount first rate productions of plays. The report becomes a long catalogue, based on a great many interviews, of the Repertory Company's sins of omission and commission that, as the end of the Project neared, had left them without influential friends in either the community or the schools. The writer's summary of a single interview, with a newspaper man who had been a constant supporter of the theatre, will give an adequate idea of the substance of this section of the report.

> This is a man with a very good background for drama criticism.... He...has a deep, abiding love for theatre. He had looked forward with great excitement and anticipation toward the fact of repertory theatre in New Orleans. He discussed with me the

> attitudes of the community toward Repertory Theatre,...he said that the Board of Directors is a farce...that the members are simply figureheads and not very impressive ones at that,...who were just there for display purposes....He expressed the deepest disappointment in the calibre of the work that the Repertory Theatre is doing. He said that there is a small, but strong group of people in the city who are not the least bit provincial and go to New York regularly to see theatre, and these people have lost interest in the Repertory Theatre because the work is not first rate. He made that sad, sad quote...that this production is so second rate that it filled him with the misery of knowing that he himself is not moved to fight hard for the survival of the theatre....I tell you that the hard, cold fact is that the theatre is not a theory, or a philosophy, or even a long list of good intentions, but in effect rests upon what is done on any given stage at...every given performance. After three years of operation, it is Mr. ____________'s opinion that the play's the thing and the play ain't very good....
>
> There is, he feels, no readily available structure waiting to carry...Repertory Theatre forward, and said that by now the productions themselves should have generated the interest and support of many more people.

Despite this gloomy assessment, the advisor expressed the hope that it was really not too late after all, and that things could be put in order, and that the theatre could after all prove viable. But the bulk of the report was, despite its hopeful conclusion, a disquisition upon its opening sentence:

> For me, Project Discovery in Providence validates the objectives of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, and Repertory Theatre in New Orleans stands as an awesome example of what should Not Be Done.

A third member of the Advisory Committee visited New Orleans in late January and was not much more impressed by Twelfth Night than the preceding visitor was with Arms and the Man.

> There is nothing wrong with being traditional, but I found myself almost hypnotized by the regular pace and expected performances onstage. I went to sleep in both performances I saw. One of the staff members sat beside me and had to leave to avoid the same problem. He also explained that this had happened to him all during the run of the show. Observation of the audience indicated that this was happening to them also.

This writer also reported that "the conversations I had with cast and crew...indicated little dedication to the company or the idea of the Laboratory Theatre." This attitude, the advisor thought, represented a definite change: "They did not seem to have the warm feeling toward the student audience that some performers seemed to feel last year."

The teachers and students, however, were not prone to criticize the quality of the production. They

> seem to accept the theatre as it is. Their concern and involvement seems to be in the educational part of the program because they will often mention the performance only briefly and then tell what they are doing in their schools or what use they have made of the packets. Occasionally a student, in this visit always a girl, will tell what dramatic activities they have undertaken at a particular school. I did not feel the sense that these are "our actors" that is especially prevalent in Providence, but that sometimes exists...in Los Angeles....The attitude of the students represents what may be a feeling of the community in general. The New Orleans Repertory Theatre has not been taken to the hearts of the people in the community.

The rest of this writer's report consists of a summary of the position of the theatre vis-a-vis the community, based on what he learned in interviews with influential citizens who were known for their activities in promoting the arts. The prognosis was the same gloomy one that the other Advisors had gained from different sources. The theatre had simply not established rapport with the community and had even, in many cases, alienated the very people whose friendship it most needed.

After listing the specifics, the writer concluded:

> My own personal idea leads in the direction of encouraging someone to raise money to establish their own rep company with or without the present organization. The schools are buying groups of tickets to touring shows for next season and they might support a more indigenous theatre. The fact that the New Orleans Repertory Theatre is an inserted company has always bothered me. They have had too many strikes against them from the first. These have been compounded by some injudicious actions and attitudes.

Late in May, toward the end of the run of the two Ionesco one-acters, a second visit was paid to New Orleans by the Advisory Committee member who had been there in December. The report deals retrospectively with the three year life of the Project in New Orleans and can best be described in Whitman's phrase as a "barbaric yawp" of indignation and disappointment. "To conclude at the beginning," it starts,

> in the New Orleans project there was nothing ventured--nothing gained--but, oh my friends, what a lot was lost!!! This being both my premise and my conclusion, I must state it first and last!

Here, with the Project sinking into the sunset, the writer laments, are the theatre people complaining (in the same words they used in 1967) of the stifling inhibitions imposed by the schools, and the school people (using the same words they used in 1967) complaining about the theatre's inability to understand the school situation.

In these dismal circumstances, the only change the writer can report is that the productions have been getting "mediocrer and mediocrer." The Ionesco plays the writer could find almost nothing good to say about. The production of "The Bald Soprano" especially offended the writer: "I will say unequivocally that there was more 'schtick' in this production than I have ever seen."

> The students laughed at this play and went for all the slapstick schtick, but since one of the prime objectives of this project must have been to raise the level of tastes, the laughter was not a proper payoff.

After an equally enthusiastic review of the traveling show that was taken into the schools to orient students to theatre of the absurd ("the teachers told me that they thought it was...wonderfully useful. E-e-e-e-gads!"), the writer reports an interview with an English curriculum expert who had been deeply involved in the project.

> It is her conviction that the results of three years of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project has left positive, indelible results no matter what happens now. For the teachers, she says, that they have had to grow--had to learn to teach in different ways--that the educational packets have taught the teachers what meaningful research is all about--forced them out of anthologies into paperback books (?!?)--that the theatre packets have led to in-service meetings which the teachers themselves now conduct and will continue to have.... She says that for the students the project has "turned on" their imaginations--that they no longer see words, but ideas and images, particularly in the study of theatre.

This interviewee had some criticisms as well. The "CEMREL people (?!!*) ...do not have respect for educators and alienated educators." The Director was rude to teachers and students and alienated educators. The Project worked, the lady insisted, because of what the educational systems did. "She went on to say that the students' reaction to the traveling show...was stronger than to any of the productions in the theatre" and "that the best production she ever saw was put on at a workshop done for teachers based on St. Joan."

> Angry as I am with Mr. Vaughan for what I feel is three years of deteriorating theatre activity, I am beside myself at the attitudes of the teachers and administrators I have spoken to in New Orleans. They really consider the theatre as only incidental to the success of the Project, certainly in second place to what Shirley Trusty and the teachers have brought to it. How did this whole thing get this messed up?

School officials even intimated to him, the writer reported, that they were considering carrying on the Project by themselves, without the Repertory Company. But the "hideous thing" about the whole situation, said the Advisor, is that, despite the tension and ill will, the theatre "never really fought the school administration in order to stand up for a principle to change attitudes, to make a difference." There were, rather, "a thousand petty quarrels and misunderstandings," with the theatre capitulating "very ungracefully" in every case.

A good part of the remainder of this report is devoted to a recital of some of the more recent "petty quarrels and misunderstandings"--almost all of them, as the writer points out, verbatim replays of oft-repeated scenes. The report's conclusion needs to be quoted, for it is, although critical of the principals in the New Orleans Project, perceptive and fair, and issues from a source deeply committed to and involved in the Theatre Project.

> Let me try to evaluate this whole mess briefly. Stuart Vaughan would have been anybody's top choice for artistic director of a Project of this kind. His theatre reputation, experience, academic background would provide the perfect credentials. What happened? I am haunted by a notion E. E. Cummings had--"at the end of the bloody battle I tore the mask from my enemy and it was me." There is Shirley Trusty--competent, imaginative, dedicated, intelligent--exactly the proper educational background. Perfect, right? Wrong. Same Cummings notion. Add to this the ever popular school versus theatre struggle for power--lack of clearly articulated objectives from Washington, understood by both theatre and school administrators alike--lack of dialogue between Project sites and between Washington and the Theatre. Surely there should have been one strong person appointed to head up the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. Well, let's not go into all that--an analysis of the whole Project is a subject of its own. Using Providence as a guide, the Project can work even under the circumstances that pertain. But--in Providence, Adrian Hall fought for what he believed in. It is my supreme conviction that Stuart did not risk enough, artistically, if no other way. Every theatre does not have to be 'Real Politick', but somewhere along the line Stuart Vaughan stopped demanding enough from himself--or the right things from the people around him. I believe that he had no strong motivation toward this particular project, but considered it a price to pay for having his own theatre. Nor was he willing to fly in the face of what he believed was damaging to the proper operation of the theatre ....I believe that he set up a situation where he could project blame, rather than blaze trails.

Los Angeles

It is clear from the preceding reports that the members of the National Advisory Committee were of the opinion that one of the primary differences between the Rhode Island and New Orleans Projects was in the artistic quality of the productions the two theatre companies presented. Exciting, creative, appealing productions, they agreed, were essential both to attaining the educational goals of the Project and to building an audience for the theatre. In Los Angeles, the reactions of the Advisory Committee were complicated by their recognition that the Los Angeles Project had, because it had as its producing agent the Inner City Repertory Company, additional objectives of a sort which, even if attained in the other sites, were never quite explicit. These objectives, having to do with increasing communication and good will among the various ethnic groups making up the Los Angeles population and with providing opportunities to minority group actors and technicians, inevitably were somewhat incongruent with the curricular and aesthetic objectives of the Project.

By common agreement, most of the productions of the Los Angeles group were uneven, with some of the direction, some of the technical work, and some of the acting being quite amateurish. The problem was confounded by the fact that the company had imposed upon them plays which were unsuited to the available talent (e.g., Macbeth) or so foreign to the ICRC's conception of its reason for existence (e.g. The Sea Gull, Our Town) that the staging and casting of the productions became much more problematical than it should have been. But the important thing is that the members of the Advisory Committee, recognizing the overriding importance of the social function of the ICRC and the Inner City Cultural Center, and the tremendous potential of these organizations for facilitating a much more important kind of education than usually takes place in schools, were willing to change (if not easily) long-standing attitudes and to rearrange their priorities in regard to the functions of a theatre. The Los Angeles company, that is to say, was judged by different criteria than the other two sites because the traditional criteria simply did not apply.

The first visit of an Advisory Committee member to Los Angeles came in the fall, toward the end of the run of A Raisin in the Sun. This production, well suited to the talents and vision of the ICRC, was, according to the advisor,

> better than the other productions I have seen at the Inner City Cultural Center. The cast seemed more dedicated toward a single purpose and operated as a company respecting each other....The play seemed to have a very involving effect upon both black and white audiences. All of those students and teachers to whom I spoke seemed to be very much impressed with the production and could tell why they were impressed and what happened to them during the performance. They stressed the "reality" of the performance and its believability....They talked about their sympathy for, and sometimes their empathy for, the characters. The students rated this the best of the shows they had seen. This was true of all the students with whom I talked about the show--black, white, and yellow.

The Advisor noted that the actors played somewhat differently to black audiences than to white (e.g., Beneatha's dance was, with a black audience, longer and "filled with more soul"), and that the responses of black audiences were more intense and active.

The advisor then noted a problem that has not been a factor in the other two sites, which have depended for the most part upon actors whose orientation is toward New York or to regional theatre. In Los Angeles, many of the actors, if not most, are film and television oriented: "Some of them give me the feeling that they are filling in with this job while they wait for a movie chance." This circumstance of having to compete with the higher salaries of the movie studios makes it most difficult to keep a company in Los Angeles together intact long enough for it to develop into an effective ensemble; and it so far has made it impossible to find a director who will fully commit himself to the company.

Moving to a discussion of the educational end of the Project, the Advisor commented,

> As in the other theatres, members of the company felt that they did not want the audiences prepared to see the plays. Many of the artists feel that the students should come into the play "cold" and that they should get their impressions of the play from the audience and actors working in the house. I visited two classrooms at Los Angeles High School, and a student remarked in one of these that he had enjoyed the Raisin in the Sun performance more than any of the others because he had not read it beforehand. This was picked up by others in the class and he was supported in this. The teacher had not used the study materials either before or after the play. I must admit a bias in this direction and I am inclined to think that it is better to let the students see the play without making a study project out of it.
>
> Some of the teachers said that they found the curriculum materials more usable this year than during the last school year. They seem quite well coordinated and indicate a concern for educational goals. Apparently Mr. Gass has been able to get teachers and administrators involved in preparing these materials, and they have a strong sense of their worth. Teacher support for the project may be gained in this way. There seemed to be a change from last year's reluctance by some teachers to an attitude of eagerness. The students seemed to have less feeling that they were being forced into an educational project, and this is probably due to teachers' attitudes, in part....
>
> Teachers and administrators seemed to think that the theatre had become an interesting part of their work. They seem to be receptive to the curriculum changes required as well as to the need for altering schedules to make the theatre trips possible....

> Everyone seems to like the morning performances better than the afternoon shows of 1967-68. School scheduling and busing seems to work out and the actors can rehearse and work in other ways during the afternoons and evenings.

The Advisor then briefly remarked on the business operations of the theatre company, which he found greatly improved and running smoothly; on possible sources of community support; and on the rehearsals of Our Town, a play the director did not want to do, and which did not seem to the advisor easily carried off by an interracial company ("One wonders whether some audiences would not think that the purpose of the production was to make a racial statement rather than to be theatre").

He concluded, "the L.A. theatre is much better....How long this remains and grows depends upon what happens with other performances...during the season now in progress."

The second visit to Los Angeles was made in January, when both El Manco and Our Town were playing. The advisor found El Manco derivative, but promising.

> But let me tell you that the most breath-taking experience was that of being part of the most incredible audience I have ever seen. Whole families, adults and children, came--black, yellow, Mexican, and white--not enormous, it is true... but a hopeful sight. People's theatre, I think they call it.

Our Town the advisor found not to be good theatre, but interesting in its conception and "fascinating to watch."

> There is no disallowing the fact that mix-matching the families does seem like a kind of experimental theatre trick, but why not?...
>
> I think it was stupid choice for the school committee to have urged on the theatre....
>
> The audience enjoyed it thoroughly, the performance I saw, and in the question and answer period got into a lot of good and important material based on their interest in what was happening on that stage. I tell you more happened than the experience of seeing a play.

"I cannot communicate strongly enough," the writer said,

> the urgency I feel about the vital importance of the Inner City Repertory Company in Los Angeles. Let me begin by eating my own quote, used by me ad nauseum--"The Play's the Thing." In this case the play or plays--while important--are not the thing at all. The idea--the philosophy--the objectives--these are the things. And we must all...find ways to help, to reinforce, and protect the Los Angeles Theatre Project. God knows, the education of the high school student (indeed, of the human

> being) could not be dealt with more relevantly than with this multi-racial, innovative theatre activity, but I see problems gathering on many fronts, since (and this fills my soul with gall) so many people feel that the whole damn purpose of this project is to teach teachers how to teach dramatic literature. And, more frightening than that, the Laboratory Theatre Project has almost by accident wandered into a vehicle that could help the entire country gain insight and perhaps some techniques to deal with the agonizing problems of race relations, of racial inequities, and, indeed, I'm not sure we are ready for the awful and awesome illumination the theatre will set up, if it once really holds a mirror up to life to show the true nature of Man in 1969. But, oh my friends, if the Office of Education has guts enough--and if CEMREL has guts enough--some true pioneering could take place out here...and we could all learn more than we could have hoped for.

A long section of this writer's report dealt with details of the Los Angeles operations and with reports of interviews with a number of school and theatre people. The writer praised Dr. Stern's growing understanding of the potential of the Project and his enthusiasm for it, but found the anti-black and anti-Mexican attitudes of some of the school people extremely disturbing. ("It is a black theatre--and it will get blacker," he quotes one official as saying, in anger. Another explained that he "doesn't go to that theatre at night because he would worry about his car being vandalized." Another objected that Negroes in a production of Macbeth would confuse students who knew there were no blacks in Scotland. A report of a bus being cut up by Catholic school students after a play brought the explanation that "many Mexican-Americans are now going to Catholic schools.")

After talking at great length to some of the men who had pioneered the ICCC, hearing them talk about the needs of the minority communities and of the forces working against anything being done for them or by them, the writer reports he went to bed "literally ill."

> I was ill from fear and frustration, from knowing that an incredible thing is trying to happen out there, and knowing how vulnerable it is to the winds of political change, educational disapproval, not enough time, not enough money, nobody caring.
>
> So I'll end this report with some questions for you.
>
> Who is in charge of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project?
>
> Who cares enough to be told that millions of dollars have been spent on this whole project--and there are lessons to be learned that are important--none so important as those that can be learned from Los Angeles where they are on to the subject of education in a way that goes beyond the goal of illustrating dramatic literature?

A third member of the Advisory Committee visited while Our Town was still running. He called the production "effective but uneven."

> the company is not yet as good as it should be--how many yellow, brown, red and black actors have been playing leading roles in any theater, let alone classic theater? Therefore the company does not have the quality it should and is taking a calculated risk to achieve an indigeneous, integrated quality. The effect of this integrated quality is not missed by the student audience who find it quite normal. (They say, quarrels with integrated casting is an adult hang-up.) At the close of the performance I saw, there was an illustrative response from the student audience which was about 95% white. A student asked, "Why an integrated cast?" An actor responded, "Because it is an integrated world." This brought a spontaneous burst of loud applause with strength behind it.

Macbeth opened during this Advisor's visit: "It was not a good performance," he wrote, adding, "It may settle in," and reserving any further comment.

> The one most significant aspect which marks this project is the integrated casting. The very thing that makes the company distinctive and the Project tremendously important is the factor that makes it difficult to get a top quality cast, integrated casting. In assessing the Project, this factor must be understood. The Inner City theater cannot be thought of as a 19th century object of the Fine Arts but much more closely as a theater in a social setting of which it speaks. Not Agit-Prop or guerilla theater, Inner City Theater in its own way comes closer to the reality of today's problems than most theater. This should be stated in next year's contract because it is a variation differing from the original concept. I believe it's an important goal to seek and, as one school administrator said, "This project is this community's last bridge to understanding among the minority groups in this city."

The writer summarized informal interviews with a dozen teachers at a well-to-do white high school. "The consensus was that the Project was a 'qualified success.'" The most frequent complaint had to do with scheduling and logistical matters and with the interracial aspects of the Project. "Mixing high schools (black and white) asked for trouble." One said the plays were slanted "for racial reasons. They weren't playing the plays as written." Other teachers did not see this as a problem; the director must have a viewpoint after all. A stage craft teacher testified that involvement in the Project had improved the work of his students.

"Eight or nine teachers" at an integrated high school had somewhat different responses. There was disappointment at the quality of the productions and the shortcomings of the house itself. One teacher expressed appreciation of the teaching aids, especially the books. "I think the kids do enjoy it. Even the ones who make trouble. They come back and they talk about it." Last year, several reported, "it was tough to get them to go"; this year students have had to be turned away. Another testified to the way seeing the plays had helped students learn to read plays. All agreed that the integrated casting was not even noticed by the students--everything in the school was just as well integrated. There were several comments on the depth of student involvement in the plays and on the fact that much of the noise the students make is talk about the play itself: they are not used to the idea of live performers yet.

But the reports of teachers using the plays in their classes were isolated, the writer commented. "I just think they don't know how. They are buried in their own lesson plans." Why, he asked, has not someone tied the ICRC into a Senior Problems or sociology class?

> There is open hostility to all changes--scheduling and curricular....The Los Angeles teachers, generally, seemed much less charged up about the Project than the other two cities....How much of this attitude is due to the quality of the shows and how much to the vast impersonality of a giant city school system I don't know.

Commenting in passing on the problems of school-theatre relations, and the vital importance of compatibility of outlook between the various responsible officials, the advisor observed, "Providence is high on compatability on this scale with New Orleans at the bottom and Los Angeles in between."

He remarked on the crippling effect upon the ICRC's morale of the fact that their contract with the O.E. is many times more restrictive and complex than that governing the other two Project repertory companies, and that the accounting procedures they are required to follow are unnecessarily expensive and wasteful of time. "We continue to be treated...like bad children," said one theatre official. (There is the feeling, whether justified or not, that the rigid controls were imposed on this company alone simply because the management is black.)

A fourth visit was made to the Project in April, during the run of The Fantasticks. Except for mild criticism of some weak performances, the writer found the play "an entertaining, imaginative, generally good production. From all reports, the first real 'hit' of the year." This advisor also evaluated the curriculum packets that had been prepared for the teachers. Though generally approving of them, and reporting that many teachers said they found them valuable, he found there was, in the packets,

> too little attention to non-literary approaches to the teaching of drama; almost exclusive emphasis on analytic/reading/vocabulary skills. (I sense a tendency to assume that drama teachers are the only ones who can "involve" students actively, while English teachers are expected to keep students in their seats.)

The report makes several specific recommendations of things that needed to be done. These included appointing a person in each high school, someone "fired with zeal" for the Project, to represent and publicize the Project in his school; establishing of tighter discipline within the acting company (the management is "too nice" with actors); giving the theatre company more autonomy, not only in artistic but in financial matters (this being needed for "self-respect"): emphasizing "new and different ways of handling drama in the classroom. The standard teaching approaches are still almost exclusively those of discussion, passive oral reading, and structural analysis."

Generalizing from an extended visit to a single high school, the Advisor remarked that students have come to accept the integrated casting ("I didn't even think about the fact that Emily was a Negro," one boy said.) The students the advisor talked to "expressed a genuine desire to see more plays," and they "displayed a gratifying awareness of the difficulty of pleasing a pluralistic audience."

The Project had been less influential than it might have been because of the mediocre quality of some of the productions, the Advisor admitted, but found the most annoying problem in the school-theatre relationship to be the "unbelievable" censorship problems.

> What schoolmarm prudes there be! Two hawk faces behind me at the theatre became progressively more rigidified as Fantasticks continued. The "Rape" song and scene came in for greatest abuse. If I heard correctly, as of this week student productions will exclude the entire song and substitute the word "abduction." (The students at Granada Hills were vastly amused to learn that adults could get so "up-tight" over something so essentially inoffensive and truly amusing.) But, oh, teachers--
>
> Honestly, now, can we really bring kids to any contemporary production, now that acting companies have adopted an open moral code that the schools have surely not acquired?

Almost equally troublesome was the ill-will caused by the fact that a day at the theatre interrupts the school schedule.

> The teachers are (unfortunately) distressed by the "timing" of the plays, mainly because they must interrupt a given unit to prepare students for particular productions. Creatures of habit and the factory-like workday, they resent intrusion on the sacred territory of prescribed "subject matter" and count minutes like a visiting Efficiency Expert. Sad.
>
> Too many principals are ex-coaches. The arts will never mean anything to them. What worries these men are undue interruptions, which they are zealous to avoid. The proportion of Philistines continues to be unusually high!

Two members of the Advisory Committee visited the Project in May, at the request of the Project Officer in the Office of Education, for the purpose of preparing recommendations on the future of the Los Angeles Project, for consideration by the agencies considering refunding the Project for the 1969-70 season. These reports are, therefore, of a slightly different nature than those already summarized, in that they were concerned not so much with describing aspects of an ongoing situation, but with evaluating the whole experience. These reports seem to us especially important and they shall be quoted at greater length than has been the case with the earlier reports.

The first of these special reports began simply, "I recommend that the Inner City Theatre be funded for one more year as part of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project." It continued:

> After accepting the contract for the present year with less money than the year before, approximately a half million dollars of debt, a decimated company and divided support from the educational community, Inner City proves to be a developing company with extremely mixed notices. Never-the-less, the company has improved while reducing the debt to $170,000.
>
> Artistically the company has gone from so-so and good notices to complete disaster and a hit. Dan Sullivan of the Los Angeles Time in his review of the Fantasticks, the final show of the season, "Well, all right. Rebounding smartly from the dullest Macbeth in history, the Inner City Repertory Company has now mounted the grooviest Fantasticks." I found the production bright, extremely well performed, and excellent fare for students. They dug it. In a candid, good-humored and uncomplicated way, the performance spoke directly to the students about the seriousness of growing up in a hostile and difficult world. It served the educational goals very well.
>
> The point is that the Company, having set for itself the difficult charge of developing a multi-racial company, succeeded artistically in the last production and deserves to be supported in the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project context for another year.
>
> For what appears to be for the first-time, a truly multi-racial professionally theatre company began to emerge--black, red, yellow, brown, and white.
>
> All aspects of the theater, artistic, technical, and managerial were multi-racial--and not as a token. This really cut across the racial lines.
>
> There are black theaters and white theaters but this is an American theater for 40,000 high school students to see. It may serve as a model.

> The press continues to speak of polarization of the races while this project assimilates them.
>
> The great need is for an artistic director who grows out of the special situation of Inner City Repertory Theater. To build towards this, Jackson is "...eager to find the best directors for each production that we possibly can to work within the frame work of goals and concepts of the organization to help us to continue to raise standards." The process is important, and a growth pattern has emerged.
>
> But the integrity of the multi-racial goals must be preserved. If the next year's contract does not specifically "provide opportunities for technical growth for artists, technicians, and managerial personnel from minority backgrounds, we are in the wrong," Jackson said. This is needed to speed the day when the Company merely looks for the best man for the job--not his color.
>
> There is a disturbing difference in response from the school side. Mr. G_______ reports that "many principals and teachers are up in arms". Mr. M_______, who knows the principals well, does not agree and reports that few if any principals have complained to him beyond mechanical difficulties of bussing etc. He says there are some teachers who complain chronically but that most believe in the project. I also heard reports second-hand, that there is some pretty mean gossip going on along racial lines. Further there is some talk among some teachers that the Project should be given to the Music Center.
>
> There is presently a good spirit about the place--both in front and back of the house--that I did not sense last year.
>
> Taking one thing with another--the positive development of the Company artistically and financially (despite complicated accounting demands), the "sociological" aspects of the Project, the necessity for a third year for the research component, the political consequences of withdrawing support and the effect of the total aspect of the Project, both artist and sociological, to the students in the Los Angeles City Schools--I strongly recommend that the Project be given a third year. I believe that "running scared" at this stage in the present situation cannot be defended effectively from an educational, artistic or community points-of-view.

The second report had two parts, a report of a site visit and a special summary report. The site visit report begins by remarking that The Fantasticks is "thank God, worthy of a good review." After complaining that the show was "nearly scuttled" by an "untheatrical, pedantic, boring slide show" which the school authorities had insisted should precede the play itself, the writer noted with approval that the production had a "charm and freshness" that carried it even over that hurdle and past a "few mediocre performances."

The writer then described following the ICRC director through Board of Education channels as he tried to obtain funds already two weeks past due him. ("Really, I got paranoid myself.") The description has a comic tone, but the writer obviously was furious at the "incredible tribulations" the financial regulations (some of which were literally impossible to meet, according to the writer) placed upon the director and the company. "Someone in Washington must speak for the theatre."

> There is...a restriction on the money from the National Endowment that has to do with Jack providing plans in advance of next year to demonstrate his concern with the artistic excellence of the productions. There should be as well, I insist, someone whose concern will be to work with the School Board and make them heave to and understand they are not operating out in some limbo where they have no one to answer to!...Get the word to Los Angeles educators that this is a National Project and Experiment.

The special report, which accompanied the site visit report, is quoted below, almost in full.

> For three years I have been writing reports relative to the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, none with a greater sense of urgency than this that I write pursuant to the Inner City Repertory Company in Los Angeles. I can only hope that I communicate the uncommon objectives, high sense of purpose, and meaningful potential that I strongly feel is basic to this project site. My conviction is that financial support must be forthcoming for Inner City for good and sufficient reasons. I am aware of the fact that this is a time when priorities tumble over each other calling attention to themselves--that American citizens have developed a revulsion against taxes, against experiments and innovation--and that to discuss the funding of a cultural project has for many the thrust of a search for the penultimate number of angels dancing on the head of a pin. We all have different versions of reality. My own reality is to see that in Los Angeles a microcosm was set up--with the theatre holding up to it a mirror in which to study the multiracial society that is the essence of this country--a polarizing society that must be reconciled. There is an attitude of despair sweeping over this nation. We must react meaningfully to that despair, and surely we must start by changing attitudes. The most difficult sociological search is for a way to change attitudes, and the theatre can do this, and the Inner City Repertory Company has done this!! This trouble-ridden, problem-plagued theatre which has faced a first year of bewildering mixed and confused objectives working at cross purposes with the objectives of the Inner City Cultural Center, staggering under an indebtedness that resulted from an unbelievable series of decisions of personnel and advisors (none of whom

remain to pick up the pieces), a second year of attempting to survive, find true objectives, create an artistic strength that can measure up to the sociological and philosophical drive--this bloody, but unbowed theatre activity has already changed attitudes, measurably--and in the name of that rare and valuable quality, I say that this project takes its place as a high priority activity.

There is no question of any kind of perfection having been reached in Los Angeles. It is not my intention to oversell the theatre so as to make it ridiculous. In terms of the original objectives of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, Project Discovery in Providence has most successfully committed itself to reaching and reinforcing the educational principles stated in the original Project proposal. But I say that the world has moved very swiftly in the last three years--and for me "Inner City" has much more relevance to the world that faces us at this moment in time--on all literature that goes out from the Center and the Theatre the legend is clear--to create a home for the minority artist, all minority artists--this at a moment when Black Theatres, Chinese Theatres, Mexican Theatres are forming and polarizing. Beyond this, there is the obvious ebb and flow of all kinds of students, teachers, citizens moving in and out of the theatre and reacting to the multiracial complexion of the company. I have seen the move from the reaction of great discomfort and distaste triggered by the production of Our Town to complete acceptance to the production of The Fantasticks (which is much stronger actually), where the multiracial casting no longer stimulated reaction from either students or community. That quickly, it seemed normal....I see clearly, however, that the artistic level of the theatre activity must improve measurably if the theatre is to survive in order to accomplish the miracles I believe it can.

It is for that reason that I plead for, at the very least, a third year. It is incredible simply that they have survived this year. Mr. Jackson has had to be executive director of the Center and of the Theatre, and inheritor of the grotesque debts and mistakes of the past. He is clearly aware of the weaknesses in the productions and understands deeply that the theatre is not a theory, but must prove itself with each performance. He has specific plans to bring in various directors in order to find that person whose creativity is matched also with a sense of special mission. He also understands the need for a strong acting company. It is obvious, also, that the theatre-school relationship needs reevaluating, repairing and restructuring in the light of the fact that there is a more emperical educational objective illuminating itself than anybody thought of originally--different perhaps--but more extraordinary. I cannot but marvel, however, that a student audience made up of young adults from what has been categorized as the most troublesome and anxiety making black school--and young people from an affluent, "other world" white school sat together for The

Fantasticks without any incident whatsoever, just a spirit of mutual enjoyment. On several evenings when I went to Inner City Theatre it was the closest I have ever come to that wonderful kind of audience we have envisioned as attending "Peoples Theatre"--Blacks, Mexicans, Indians, Chinese, Whites--from places so far apart as Watts and Hollywood.

There are many positive reactions resulting from a highly imperfect structure, including reaction that comes from as far afield as Oakland, California, where this theatre is looked upon as a source of minority pride. I think it should be understood also that from Dr. Cannon, Bob Kennard and 'Jack' Jackson I am aware of the fact that Inner City is working against heavy odds to change attitudes in Watts particularly, where the drive is toward a more militant, violent approach to racially oriented theatre. The people who are now on the Board of and run the Inner City Repertory Theatre are deeply motivated toward building bridges between all the races and are dedicated toward finding every technique to homogenize rather than polarize. My view is that the artistic strength of this theatre must be reinforced. I believe that this can happen and is being planned. I believe that stronger lines of interaction must be developed between theatre and school, by using members of the theatre community in the school situation and by bringing teachers and administrators closer into the objectives of the theatre. I feel that the particular structure set up in the Los Angeles School System tends to create a barrier between teachers and theatre. This has been recognized and a committee has been formed to better communicate throughout the School System more intelligent understanding of the theatre. Up to now it seems to me the theatre has been so plagued by money problems, and the School System seeing their role as Censors and Schedulers--both sides must look to themselves and find innovative roles worthy of the potential. I wish, also, that attention could be paid to the role of the Center in finding new scripts by minority artists and the educational value could be recognized in the possibility of exposing the students to a work in progress, a work that illuminates a culture not familiar to them. In the all-in-all, I am convinced that if the innovative possibilities of this theatre-school could be recognized and responded to, much important information could be extracted to help us all....

I once again strongly urge continued support of this small theatre in Los Angeles which might provide for us all great interest return on the investment made.

The 1969-70 Season in Los Angeles

During the 1969-70 season, visits by members of the Advisory Committee were confined to Los Angeles, and, because of the reduction in CEMREL's research budget due to the conclusion of the Project in two of the sites, visits were made only by the two Advisors who were most familiar with Los Angeles and best able to give professional judgments upon the artistic and business aspects of the operation. All members of the Advisory Committee were also asked to give us a summary evaluation of the entire Project. Except for one very lengthy statement from Mrs. Marcelle Felser, in the form of a tape-recorded interview, the summary statements we received from the Advisors were brief, in that the Advisors referred us to judgments made in earlier reports, which they had not found substantial reasons for revising. The judgments have already been reported in the preceding sections, and we have chosen to print the Advisor's brief summary statements along with those of other principal participants in the Project in a later section of this volume.

One member of the Advisory Committee visited Los Angeles in February, 1970, and saw early performances of *Antigone*.

> The Inner City production of the Anouilh version of *Antigone* was a fine one. I'm convinced it's the best work by a multi-racial company I've seen at ICT. I saw a morning matinee for high school students and an evening performance for adults the same day. The play was well-cast, well-designed and directed and extremely well-performed. The verve and committment of the company was infectious.
>
> As soon as Chorous had said, "--Antigone, the skinny one over there--" in the opening scene, the students owned her. They identified thoroughly with Antigone and her problems throughout the play. The applause for the curtain calls was strong and animated for the company but the students revved it up appreciably when Antigone took her bow. The production of this version of *Antigone* was extremely relevant to the students. They missed *nothing*. They understood the feelings involved in Antigone's primitive drive to fulfill her individual life and Creon's personal drive to preserve the state. They felt the genuine conflict, a conflict sophisticated and complex. How do I know this? Simply because I observed and felt the way the students followed the unfolding of the play. They dug it. If they hadn't, the house would have been pandemonium. Some of the final scenes were played in a breathless silence. A genuine artistic encounter was taking place. The cops were laughed at--*but not Creon!*
>
> If this level of performance had been average, ICT would have been in much better shape today. Owen Dodson's direction was fine.

The rest of the report was devoted to notes on interviews with a Los Angeles drama critic and with two members of the Inner City Board of Directors. The critic found that the ICRC had been a disappointment. "I don't think they've known what to do with the interracial thing.... but maybe we're too unsophisticated."

The Inner City, the critic judged, had lost the sympathetic white theatre-going audience which had come to the first opening nights, but it had not been accepted by any of the minority communities. "And I don't know why that is." The shows are not attractive to the younger theatre-goers. They aren't black enough to compete with other black companies. They aren't slick enough to attract the conventional-minded theatre-goers.

> All the critics that I know in this town were extremely favorably disposed to the Inner City before it opened, after it opened, too. But critics cannot generate enthusiasm when there is nothing to go on....It seems to me ICRC didn't do either--the popular or the critically exciting. They failed in both....The trouble with most of the regional theatres is that they don't have a genuine entrepreneur or "intendant" or whatever. This is the story for most effective theatre.

The Advisor then interviewed a member of the ICCC's Board of Directors who had been involved at the inception of the ELT Project, but who had been rather inactive for the preceding year. The Board member reflected on a recent meeting of the ICCC board:

> Things were so mixed up. Half a dozen were there and we talked about exactly the same thing in exactly the same way as we had before [three years before.] Every meeting was how to live financially until tomorrow. In the end we never talked about the production or the quality of productions or what to do or how to relate to anything. We talked about how to raise money. I finally decided after a while I would go but I was hoping we would talk about something besides money. I was embarrassed, because in the original effort I got my friends in business and industry to give them things at very low rates, give them credit. And they weren't paid. I designed the lighting control system and got the price way down and then they couldn't pay.

The Advisor then, trying to get information on one of the factors which had contributed greatly to the financial plight of ICCC, asked how it came that the ICRC chose the Boulevard rather than the (in 1967) equally available Orpheum Theatre for its home. The Board member recalled that he and others had recommended the Orpheum.

> We said there just isn't any other place we can afford to do this thing in. We were out scratching for money when David Lunney [Managing Director] and Andre Gregory [Artistic Director] were getting $20,000 a year, a self-named salary. The year before Lunney was making $11,000 in the same job. They were paying $350.00 to people who had never made more than $180.00 in their lives. These people were going along with it because Gregory Peck said we have to pay good money to get good people.
>
> We looked at this Boulevard Theatre and I said, you know this is really going to be a hell of an expense to make it a decent theater. The floor is pretty flat - I laid out a plan to use the balcony for audience and put the stage floor up there. Then we clean out the bottom area for storage space. We have room to build and work but there were too few seats - not up to 900. We got a little problem of height and moving. But the cost would just have been too much. Then Irv Zeigler came up with the notion of the Orpheum. Irv, some others including Peck, and I went down. Shakespeare used to play there. It's a hell of a good house. And what kind of a better ethnic mixture do you want-- right there. I thought, gee, this is great. Backstage, dressing rooms. Backstage was rigged. There was even a little bit of light. We wouldn't have been starting from scratch. And the Orpheum was losing money. Acoustics were a lot better-- it was two different worlds. I was very excited about it and we could have got it for $25,000 a year, approximately, rent. I got Peck to agree. We went backstage and I showed him how it was set to go. He was concerned on size. I said you cut off a little on the sides, use the first five rows of the balcony and you've got a lovely little ultimate theatre. He agreed and also the rest. We couldn't get Alan Schneider [as Artistic Director], and then I got a notice to meet at Peck's house to meet this Gregory. Gregory is a bright guy and exciting. Peck was selling him big. They took him down and showed him the Boulevard Theater and the Orpheum. Gregory thought we should go right into the Boulevard Theater because that's really in the area. Jack Jackson hadn't anything to do with any of this. He was on the Board of Directors then.

The Advisor asked whether the difference in location between the two houses was a consideration. "Not a damn bit," said the Board member, since both are equally "on the edge of the ghetto." "They just gave Andre Gregory what he wanted."

> We had to build a theater from the ground up. We did it, but we didn't have any money left for carpeting. The seats were a mess. Finally got some paint. I laid out a lighting

> system to save money in the long run, to pay for itself in five years. The outfit who put it in at cost almost went broke because they weren't getting paid.

Switching to the subject of the desired multiethnic company, the Advisor asked whether its development had been gone about effectively.

> No-- And Andre Gregory talked big about a multi-racial company. Peck talked big. And properly. And with good intentions. But first, Peck said, we got to build this repertory company with the best actors and we get that set and we have a big success and we play three days of an Equity week for the public. We get to keep that. On paper it sounded swell. Certain people that shouldn't have got all the attention first. Jack thought you should hire people in more depth from the minority communities early. Gregory's idea was to hire Lou Gossett and Paul Winfield and a couple of other big people and put them in the company. One or two big name black actors would do it. Hire a few spot people and then his friends. Some good actors, some of them. We pay all their expenses while we poor people out here worked scratching around trying to get $2.00 seats fixed. Didn't use the company at all. Jack Jackson had no real authority until Gregory was out. Jackson stated that we should really not have the policy of hiring the best one for the job no matter what race. Because minorities haven't had the same chance to develop their talents as others, we should give them the biggest breaks, and I can understand that and can see that. But in my opinion, these are two extremes, neither one of which would quite work.
>
> When Jack took over and everybody else withdrew, Al Cannon and Jack were making the decisions. Jack is now making them all unilaterally. I think it's gone too far the other way. I see the technical problems unmet. The theater's dirty. No real sense of pride about it. They don't drive themselves enough to have a professional company. It's not a professional company. The company idea was killing us.
>
> But with all of these troubles, it would be a rotten shame if it didn't keep going.

The second Board member who was interviewed first stressed the difficulties of raising funds in competition with more established organizations, and the particular difficulty of finding, within the minority communities, technicians with expertise in raising and handling money and in managing organizations.

> We did have a huge struggle in terms of the identity of our organization. Because of the lack of know-how we had to

> borrow heavily on the expertise of others. Our organization was threatening to become a white organization. This ran counter to the whole image we're projecting in the community as a self-help organization. The fact that we were related to the school board didn't help it any. The school board with its conservative hearings. It's incredible that they even adopted the program.
>
> Then we originally had a white artistic director and a white artistic manager. They came hot out of Philadelphia with all kinds of thoughts and feelings with little awareness of what was going on in our community. We had some heavy-weights on the Board with some very strict ideas about how it should go, but again the lack of sensitivity of what our organization was about, that is, a center of excellence in the minority community whereby minorities would commune in terms of cultural and art works. And it threatened to become a kind of white-dominated "Music Center." We had a huge struggle which eventuated in the resignation of Andre Gregory, and, eventually, David Lunney. But let me tell you there is great difficulty and great damage to an organization in terms of the "Sturm und drang" about this whole thing. That takes its toll of organizational energy.
>
> At the same time, we had such people as Josie and Jack who have not had the opportunity of managing big dollars in this area, who had to go through a learning process, who had to learn while doing. While involved in all this kind of struggle. This has taken its toll of the Board too; it's taken its toll of me.
>
> I must say that I haven't been at the Board level as effective a leader as I might be, except in urgent situations--because the power really now has gone to the staff. Jack is like an Executive Vice-President. He runs the show. He's the creative genius behind the operation, and, in effect, is the maintainer of the spirit of the organization.

There was further discussion about the development of an Executive Committee, which could take a more effective role than a Board of Directors in reorganizing and directing the ICCC. With the retrenchment in federal funding for the arts and education and the changing social climate, the interviewee stressed, other organizations are having similar struggles.

> This is not an easy business....It's kind of a new ball game. And we're learning the rule in the new ball game.

On the question of Inner City's acceptance in the community, the Board member noted that it is often overlooked that Inner City is competing for funds, in the poorest sections of the community, with a number of other minority arts organizations. Jack Jackson, who was present at the interview, observed at this point that there had been a "definite effort" at cooperation between the various organizations in Watts and the other minority communities.

> There's always been mutual respect. There is a tendency on the part of the external community to say, why don't all you guys unite and become one organization. That's never seen from the inside. These groups are along far enough that they have a secure identity so they can begin to relate to each other. There's a need for diversity. But we're all feeling the need for more and more communication. So that we all can voluntarily begin to find our niche and not over-lap. Ebony Showcase is right up the street from us. So for years, we've tried to find ways not to compete with Nick but our activities feed into his and hopefully vice versa. But no need for us to close up Nick's theater and have him join in with us or vice versa.

One difficulty, the Board member suggested, was that there was not a play-going tradition in the black community, and that one had to be initiated, and that this demanded plays that spoke to the black experience. Even with black actors, Shakespeare is still the white establishment.

> Consequently much of our audience was white who really wanted to see what was going on in the Inner City. But we were glad to see them because it was money in the coffers and we needed that. Also to have the number of Blacks increase in the audience. So that you don't have all the seats empty while the Blacks get with it. That might be construed as not having much support in the community. In a way the community was very proud of that fact that we had a major facility in the community that for the first time in the country--for the size that we have. We didn't always have to go out of the community for a show. So that there was this pride.
>
> There was also a reflection of community pride in the apprenticeship program. There were a variety of programs where there has been involvement of black youth. There was a swirl of activity which was kind of a realistic involvement of the community. You couldn't measure community involvement in terms of audience profile. But in terms of the number of blacks, browns and orientals hanging around. That was evidence of community support. We were handicapped by giving white plays. Slow Dance on the Killing Ground, the black audience participation went way up. But then it went down with the classics. So you know, we've

> been blessed in terms of having a major grant and so big immediately, but on the other hand, we've been handicapped because we've been tied to the apron-strings of the school system by being committed to tried and true theatrical fare. More and more in local papers like the Sentinel, you begin to see mentions of the Inner City. More and more actors have done things in Inner City. So that the word is out and I feel that we are as established in L.A. as any group in terms of contributing and terms of support. What we've attempted to do was impossible. An exciting evening, eighteen months ago, was when there was the Japanese Dance group, the Adore Festival, and at the same time there was an Indian pow-wow going on, and we invited the Indians up to see and participate in a joint program with the Festival. Part of the evening. Japanese, black and white and everybody dancing around this circle in an Indian dance. These are the kinds of things--whoever heard of an American Indian and Japanese dancing on the same floor?
>
> It's a complicated question--community sanction. If you look at the total community, I think we have worked miracles. We have earned community sanction.

Jackson took up this theme and expanded on it:

> The Inner City has tried to embrace all the minority communities in that area. It seems to me proper that because the community in which we've located is about evenly divided between Black, Mexican, and Asian and American Indians. It's something no organization has accomplished in the history of this country. We really have succeeded in getting the participation of all these groups. The art of participation on stage, off-stage in the audience. It certainly goes up and down--Mexicans will come to see Teatro Campesino; fewer will come to see Black Quartet. But many of the Mexicans who did see Teatro Campesino do come back to see Black Quartet and East-West. It's a slow, difficult process; but very worthwhile.
>
> Another thing. There's a strange misconception--we are not reaching the black community with the theatre because there is no tradition. I would say there are more black theatre groups in proportion to population in this city than any population group in the city. More black people, proportionately, go to the theatre than whites today in Los Angeles. I really believe this--there's the Performing Arts Society of Los Angeles, Studio Watts, Watts Writers Workshop, Ebony Showcase. All of these doing theatre attracting huge numbers of black people. I don't have the statistics yet but I'm trying to compile them. Some of our

> audiences for certain things are 90% black. All of them are at least 25% black regardless of what we're doing. A couple of local reporters have made snide remarks. [One lady columnist]--I'm dealing with her in particular because she writes a beautiful article about the wonderful work that someone is doing and at the end of the article she says, "But I wish that some group would come along that could really reach the black community." That's so absurd. If there's any theater in the world that's really reached the American community, I'd like to know where that theater is located. If she could really tell me the Music Center has "reached" the white community of L.A., I'd be very surprised!

The second member of the Advisory Committee who visited Los Angeles was Mrs. Marcelle Felser, Artistic Director of The Vanguard Theatre Project in Pittsburgh. She submitted a trip report, which is not reproduced because its substance is included in the statement quoted below.

We are departing here from our practice of presenting the Advisors' views anonymously because Mrs. Felser's statement is an intensely personal one; because she is, by her years of experience, perhaps as well qualified as anyone in the country to evaluate both the educational and artistic aspects of the Project, so that her views carry a special weight; and because she wished to be identified with this statement.

The statement, it should be explained, has been transcribed from a tape-recorded telephone conversation, this procedure having become necessary when Mrs. Felser's written statement was lost in the mails. The transcription has been edited for the sake of clarity and slightly abridged.

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> Let's start with Inner City. In a sense, the unfortunate thing is that the third year of the Project in California was really the first year. What we're going to have, I think, are a lot of abortive findings because neither the theater nor the schools nor CEMREL nor the Advisors were able to communicate clearly enough the different objectives or come up with enough criteria to evaluate these new objectives, as differentiated from the original objectives of the laboratory project. And unfortunately, what I think we're going to find is a lot of false starts and confusion and a good understanding of where the problem lies. If it can be considered some sort of triumph, I think that you have a clear understanding of the difficulties in proposing any kind of change when you have a bureaucracy such as the

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Board of Education involved. They decide what it is they're going for, and then they squeeze into the schools anything they can to get them to their predecided objectives. So they're not clear for something new coming through.

Now, instead of being so general let me get into a discussion of Room Service, which is the play I saw. When I came to California I went quick as a flash to see Room Service because I was so damned confused as to why such a trivial play should have been chosen in this year of years. For me, it got to be the quest for the grail, and I suppose given my own biases as to why I feel the theatre is so meaningful, the choice of Room Service got me out of my seat and out to California to discover what the hell was going on out there. And I think that somewhere within the choice of Room Service and the production of Room Service and the reaction to it you have a paradigm of the deep abiding problems of such a project. I discovered when I got there that both Jack Jackson and Georg Stern had chosen Room Service and had chosen it because (this is a quote) "they wanted a play with something going for it." And then when pressed a little further to the wall, they said they wanted "not only a play that the kids would like, but a play that the teachers would like." They were pushed in the same way that all the theatres involved in this project were pushed "for a play that the kids could enjoy." Which is remarkably illustrative of the fact that teachers believe that the theatre is a recreational facility, among all their other misunderstandings. And they felt that this good farce would give the kids something to enjoy. That shows a remarkably shallow understanding of what the hell the theatre is all about.

Now what happened was that, because both Jack and Georg are scarred from their previous experience, this seemed to them to be an elegant idea; they suddenly felt they could come home free if they chose a play that could not be controversial in its contents, that didn't make such demands on the students that they get restless and throw spitballs. That if, in fact, they could have something that was hard and driving and fast, so that everybody could have simply a marvelous time, they could somehow get to that strange word called success. This illustrated, then, the second absolutely absurd thing that happened in this whole project. You now come to a thing called box office, where this program which was intended to be an educational experiment suddenly got hooked into the other misconceptions about theatre, which is that if people don't enjoy it they won't come back. Box office out in California affected the program in the worst possible way. "Show me you like me; be a good boy and sit in your seat to show me you like me." It's literally, as far as I'm concerned, a pandering operation.

Let me say that I think that having worked together for a period of time the theatre community was working in a better way. But I think that the choice of that production demonstrated clearly that Jack and Georg, who are in the end the arbiters of what must and must not go on in that theatre, are neither one of them theatre men. I think it clearly demonstrated that we must talk about that theatre not in terms of its social implications but in terms of its strength as a viable institution. That theatre cried out in the third year (as it did in the previous years) for a strong theatre man or woman, for a creative director who could, let us say, facing the same choices, say, "O.K. let's do The Miser by Moliere," which is a sensational farce comedy, which could have been made very relevant to the audience in terms of what their unique objectives were. The damn thing is about the landlords that have bilked them for years, if we're talking about the black minority community. What you saw was a situation where the theatre itself had to be reduced by the fact that it became, in the end, only secondary to the major objectives of the schools and the ICCC.

HOETKER: Can you imagine a really first rate creative theatre person working under the conditions that the L.A. schools bureaucracy imposed on the Project?

No, darling. I really can't. I think that a good first-rate theatre person would have spit in the eye of everybody there.

But what I am doing is saying that all the ills of the theatre are not the ills of the attempt. I'm differentiating you see. As far as I'm concerned Inner City Repertory Theatre is the only worthwhile thing that has happened in three years. So I am not damning the attempt. What I am saying is that I think it is important to clarify what is wrong with the operation before we go on to say what is achieved by it. I think that the situation that was set up out there was as ludicrous as any artificial bastard that has ever set up in the world. The whole idea was a very strange one. To create a theatre to match something as powerful as the Board of Education out in California.

What I am saying merely is that this production illuminated for me those things that were wrong that could not be put right. You have this situation of a very important, interesting, valuable sociological experiment going on through the auspices of a theatre. The theatre itself was not functioning in a healthy way or a proper way. But I saw that people were affected and there were some enormous gains, even with what I felt was a very crippled operation. Now there was no question that Jack and Josie Dotson and all the people involved in this experiment knew what was happening. Josie Dotson said it to me with powerful clarity. She said, "I like to talk about this more than I like to go in and see the plays, because I don't think the plays have come up to what it is we want." And that is what I am trying to say in my own preposterously ponderous way, that the play that I saw was a ludicrous choice. It was done in a kind of second rate way because it would be impossible for any good theatre person to survive in that atmosphere. Then I have to say, again, that I found out there a kind of intense preoccupation with what I considered to be the truly important matters, and therefore a program worthy of whatever attention, whatever money, whatever energies have been expended on the place.

HOETKER: Can I ask you to comment just a little bit further on the atmosphere out there and what it is about it that makes Los Angeles anti-theatrical?

I will tell you that the thing that makes it anti-theatrical or atypical is, number one, that you have Jack Jackson at the head. This is a man who is, by the evaluation of the people who work around him, a "saint." He really does not understand how to run a theatre. He is a beautiful man and he is a cultured man, so he is capable of the concept. But for him, you must understand, the concept is not just the theatre; it is also the workshops, the classes for the kids; it is a whole picture that he is trying to fill in. He is interested in the finding and the reconcilation of multiracial artists, which is an incredible objective, a beautiful objective. What he is trying to do is set up a training site for the minority artist. Everybody keeps saying, "Well, the way is clear now. Hot dog, we can hire black, yellow, green, polka-dot, technical people, directors, actors." But there is nowhere for them to have been trained, the minority artist is in desperate need of a training place. O.K., well let me explain to you that when you set up a theatre as a training place this reduces the strength of the theatre. It gives you a valuable resource but not a valuable theatre. That is another of the things that makes that place untheatrical. The communication of objectives, for some reason I don't understand, was very imperfect. The interesting thing to me was to talk to various people around that place and discover that not everybody had a clear idea of where this thing was going.

MISS HUBBELL: You're talking about people within the theatre?

People within the theatre family itself. The Inner-City Theatre family.

Now I start out in this enormously negative way, and I can only afford to do this because you have two years of my writing on the thing, and because I intend that I shall say with equal convictions that I still consider it an enormously important, almost mystical thing that Jack was going for. What he is going for is so extremely vital. Even beyond, "Let's give the minority artists a place in which he can train" to "Let us present a picture of a world where color no longer has a meaning." What makes what he is doing so difficult is that he skipped a whole step. In the beginning, this was a white-oriented country where all of the literature and certainly all of the performing arts were white. Now the next step that the country is taking is the polarization of the minority artists, each into his own ethnically oriented theatre. You know, the Negro Ensemble, the Mexican Theatre, the Chinese Theatre. That's the easier second step, because after having gone through an identification with self, and a kind of reflection on the black experience, the red experience, the yellow experience, and so on, one hopefully can move to the third step, where color doesn't matter, and that is where Jack is already.

Jack's theatre is literally saying that this is a world in which there are no racial barriers, but where there are other archetypal problems in which we are all involved and by which we are all concerned. I suppose that is why a choice like Room Service flips me out, because I think that when you provide your audience with such an incredible concept, there is almost a sacred obligation to demonstrate that there is a community of strength that is needed from all human beings in order to face all of these archetypal problems or even delights and joys. I suppose that's why I wanted them to do more meaningful material. So, the point that I make to you is that in spite of all the early agonies, he is now operating a quite mediocre theatre in which first rate objectives function. Now, again, the wonder to me is that his vision has not been communicated properly either to the community at large or the community at small.

As abortive as this whole thing was (and I've said this last year was the first year), you did get a demonstration of the speed with which new things can become familiar. Even last year from when I saw Our Town until the time that I saw The Fantasticks there had been an enormous kind of psychic change that went on in the audience. In Our Town, they were all buzzing and bubbling and terribly uncomfortable; in The Fantasticks the racial implications were hardly noticed; in Room Service it couldn't have been less relevant. It didn't record, it had absolutely no meaning. I think that was accomplished. I also think that you had an incredible situation where people were forced to face and confront their own hang-ups. It was absolutely necessary that you confront your own narrowness of vision. I know that this is the effect it had on me, and I take myself very seriously in this situation, because I've been a good old-fashioned nice white liberal for years. I'm fifty years old, and there has been more rhetoric spilled out of my mouth than anybody you might know. But I, myself, had to confront many things out there, and I am deeply and forever grateful as a director and as a human being for what I saw at Inner City. Because I went out there really seriously believing in my wonderfully understanding white liberal way that when you put a black artist on stage, or a Chinese artist, you are making a very definite specific statement and a statement which needs to be explained and if it cannot be explained within the content of the play, then you are using someone with the wrong characteristics. Out there I suddenly recognized what a goddamn piece of white bigotry that is. I wanted to vomit all over my beautiful rhetoric and ideals. There were many attitudes that I could now face by virtue of the fact that that place existed.

In watching all of the people on stage and recognizing how quickly this goes from grotesque to familiar I learned about casting a little better. Do you know what I'm saying? It demonstrated for me the possibility of going beyond my limited horizons. It was just embarassing for me to confront. I sit with Jack Jackson, I sit with Alfred Cannon, I sit with Bob Kennard and I am aware to the bottom of my soul that I am with three top flight men, all of whom are sensitive and brilliant and possibly three men, the like of which I meet once every century. And then I go as a director into the theatre and say, well, this black man will bring this statement with him and I'll say what statement. Jesus Christ, it terrified me to view that. But what I had to do was to look at myself and recognize where the problem lay, not with the stage but with me. And there's where I think that a lot of scarring went on, because that's a very frightening notion that you've been wrong all of your life and that there are hidden cesspools in all of us. So I think that this is a very trying and very difficult kind of experiment.

I feel that all of us who are working in this field have no more than scratched the surface of what the theatre can do. I must have great respect for this thing trying to get born out there. Let us say that right now it is a tiny deformed child, straining at very important concepts about the ways that the theatre links in to the philosophy and psychology of a human animal. These are difficult concepts, most particularly for an American, who only understands the theatre as a recreational facility. But great theatre has throughout the ages changed the way that men think. The point that I am making to you is that in the very largest sense, the theatre is the only continuous voice of the human being that speaks across thousands of years of experiences, that teaches the continuity of the life's experience. How goddamn brilliant it would be if that voice could be used to make people understand, as it did in the beginning, as it has throughout its history.

We are each one of us aware somewhere maybe in our blood of the fact that the theatre can make a major contribution to the way that man thinks, to the way men believe. So the point is that, in evaluating the whole damn thing in Providence, New Orleans, and California, I find that only Inner City Repertory Theatre had any experimental objectives at all. Part of the trouble has been that school systems are not the least bit experimental. So to start an experiment with the school system is very difficult; it's like starting an experiment with an IBM machine which keeps throwing the card back in your face saying "reject" because it doesn't fit them little holes.

The term "laboratory theatre" is nonsensical. The results of this whole three years could have been predicted three years ago. One of the things that is obvious, if we can all bear to go through this again, is that there were not visionary people designing the project. Their objectives were extremely limited and given the amount of money that has been spent in these last three years the objectives should have been far more radical, far less easy to predict. But, then you see you would have been left with the uneasy feeling that you're not quite sure of what happened. There might have been some very exciting fallout, though. This way, what happened is we learned such brilliant things as: "if you don't have good theatre people you're not going to have good theatre." Terrific! And then we learned such marvelous things as: "if you don't have good theatre you can't link successfully to education." Terrific! This is terrifying in retrospect.

HOETKER: Marcelle, given all that you have just said about the limitations of the conception of the Project and so on, what positive effects do you think the Project may leave behind it? What is there now that wouldn't have been there if they hadn't spent all of the money?

If you use no other evaluating mechanism than telling what happened in Rhode Island you have a picture of what happens. When a student is exposed to this part of aesthetic experience with a group of people over a period of x number of years, he is nourished aesthetically and intellectually. It seems to me that you should have data on that. I think you probably will end up deciding that the other places were not as successful. It changed things, you know. Even in New Orleans. I have a quote in one of my reports from a very limited little lady who's the chairman of something or other, who was very excited about the way the theatre experience had changed teachers in their preparation for things. If you had had a more unlimited kind of experimentation, you would have had more breath-taking results.

But in this traditional undertaking--I recall Roger Stevens' immortal words, that this whole thing was to "illustrate dramatic literature." Well, by God, it did that! It illustrated dramatic literature!

Now there is another thing that happened and I am sure it happened. I read some of the letters, I have read some of the reports, I have talked about it to kids. Good, bad, or indifferent, these kids have been left with the concept of the theatre as literature, and they faced up to the theatre as an intercommunicating art form. Nobody should be allowed to be handed a piece of music and have someone else sitting looking at these notes on a piece of paper and saying, "Wow, hot dog, damn beautiful concert!" The theatre, the actors, the director, the scene designer, the light designer, brought the music to the school. There are people now who have heard the music. That's important and I am not saying there were no results, Jim, I am saying the results could all have been predicted, that's all. On the basis even of the limited activity there has been in this country.

We keep having things happen in this country, things like the WPA theatre and all other kinds of marvelous experiments, and we find out a lot of important information that's not of any use to anybody. I hope that won't happen with this, but it may. But I think that the project attained its original objectives, don't you? So I think you could say that, in terms of its original objectives, the project has proven itself. But in terms of a true laboratory experiment, Inner City is valuable to me because it reinforces my feeling that theatre is conceptual and reafirms my strong belief that it is a serious and important activity which can be of superior use as a resource for the total community. I think it has been proven by this activity that it is a good and important thing for students to go to a theatre and to come together for a group aesthetic experience. If you'd like to know my ideas, where I think this whole thing fits in, is in a type of experiment in which we start with elementary school students who are taught improvisation and theatre games so that their wonderful imaginations can be salvaged rather than systematically destroyed. I never knew a kid yet who didn't run into a nursery holding on to a rocket and it's the damn teacher who tells them its a garbage pail. What happens to the rocket? The magic goes away. What I am saying is that really teaching theatre as an art form is so serious, for this reason: the theatre is the collaboration of every art form that is known to man. It comes together to form its own unity, a new unity. As such, if we really had a serious consideration of theatre as an art form you would be involving the student in every art form that exists. I take that seriously.

The elementary school students should also see theatre productions. When a student goes on to high school, there should be a Vanguard-like project that goes into the high school to introduce the students to professional theatre, group theatre. High school students also should come to the theatre. The extraordinarily gifted student should work at school with a strong teacher of theatre and he should work in a much more complicated way than they are working now. These students should also be very intimately tied into the theatre, where they can work with professionals. All those people, the high school students, the teachers of theatre, and the theatre company should be involved in mounting a production for the high school students to take into the elementary school. The teachers in the meantime should attend workshops at the theatre, so these so-called teachers of theatre can work with professionals. Now what you should have is a theatre which is always working with education in ways that it does best, training teachers and students alike in the techniques and the thrust and the ideas theatre communicates all the time. The theatre should be used in still another way, so within the theatre there should be a production that is designed with the use of educational consultants and specialists. Well, I am saying to you that all of this can happen, should happen; I hope it will happen in the future. If step by step, and I am willing to acknowledge that you've got to do this step by step, you can reconstruct in people's minds the idea of what theatre is, so that it is not just sitting there and laughing over Mary, Mary.

The Laboratory Theatre Project was a step toward making the educational community aware of the fact that the theatre works in more ways than simply illustrating a book from the library. I believe you should by this time have enough data to be able to say that the theatre should and can be recognized as a tool for education. Not reduced to a tool for education. For an English translation of that phrase I give you the ever popular New Orleans production that was supposed to explain "The Bald Soprano," where a production was designed by a teacher to explain another production.

Education cannot use the theatre, but the theatre can be of most exquisite, never ending use to education, if it is allowed to function as its own institution. Now, I hope that you have gathered your data together in such a way that you recognize the importance of even this one step.

Let me say to you again: If CEMREL does not communicate the information that has been gathered we have had no results. To look upon this whole thing as a way of bringing theatre activities to New Orleans which made them hate theatre forever, or even a way of bringing success to Adrian Hall (who, believe me, would have made it either with or without, because Adrian Hall is an artist), or as a way to establish Inner City Rep, where a lot of the money almost ruined the original yearning and striving of the Inner City Center, then that does not seem to me to be an acceptable result at all. But if CEMREL can codify this, document it, and disseminate the information properly to the proper people, then we have had a result.

Part Four

student, educator, and citizen reactions

A SAMPLING OF STUDENT, EDUCATOR, AND CITIZEN COMMENTS ON "PROJECT DISCOVERY" IN RHODE ISLAND

Throughout the course of the Project, we collected and were given thousands of comments upon the Project and its parts. In this and the following two sections we have reprinted samples of comments from all three sites, trying (1) to represent the whole range of stated opinions and (2) to give a balance of good, bad, and mixed judgments that reflects the distribution of judgments in the entire set of comments.

The "comments" section on Rhode Island is briefer than the corresponding sections for the other sites. This is primarily because were were able to find very few negative comments from Rhode Island sources, and approving comments, by their nature, quickly become repetitive. The comments that are included below cover only the first three years of the Project--the period of federal funding. Comments gathered during the fourth year, when the Project operated with school and state funds, are dealt with in the "history" of the Rhode Island Project, above.

In Rhode Island, the sources for the comments were these: letters forwarded to us by school and Project officials and Trinity Square personnel; unsolicited marginal comments on questionnaires; solicited judgments obtained by a series of questionnaires given to students, principals, English teachers, and teachers of other subjects; transcripts of interviews; endorsements of the Project on petitions distributed during the "Save Project Discovery" campaign in 1969; notes made by staff members and our area Coordinatór; reports made by teachers and students selected at random in the theatre lobby and asked to comment in writing on the day's performance; stories in student newspapers; and reports by theatre people visiting Rhode Island who were asked to commit their impressions to paper.

None of the comments in this section came from the press. Newspaper notices, reviews, and feature stories were treated at length in earlier end-of-year reports on the Project, and newspaper treatment of the Project has been summarized in the "history" of the Project.

The comments are arranged below in a rough chronological order. After trying out a large number of other ways to organize the comments, we fell back upon the arranging of them in the order in which they were made. With any other type of organization--though this is not so apparent with the Rhode Island comments as with those from the other sites--the reader would not get an accurate impression of the diversity of opinions that a particular play or a particular feature of the Project often elicited. Simply juxtaposing contrasting opinions on the same question gives the reader a sense of the range (and the heat) of responses to the Project in each site, and make it clear how much is really lost by reducing such comments to descriptive statements on the order of: "60% approved, 30% disapproved, and 10% had no opinion."

The Comments

Several weeks ago I heard you speak about "Project Discovery" at Brown University. I was particularly intrigued with the analogy you drew between the high school audience today and the Elizabethan audience. When I mentioned that analogy to my wife, an English teacher at East Providence High School, she invited me to watch, to hear, the reactions of her students when they saw St. Joan. I accepted the invitation, and on the morning of November 1, witnessed the high school reaction to Shaw: unruly, primitive, surprised, rude, undisciplined, and fresh. That reaction was not at all as surprising as the actors' reaction to the audience: those actors put on nothing short of a first rate performance under decidedly trying conditions. Your company is heroic, courageously artistic. Some hours after the play ended, my wife told me that the players' courage had nearly failed, that they had threatened to end the play at the fourth scene unless some order was imposed on the students, because many of those students do appreciate what all of you are doing. I was in the audience, I saw how many jeered, laughed in the wrong places, made odd noises, and so forth - 20% perhaps. And I saw how many watched, and listened, and felt, and thought - 80% at least. It is a highly worthwhile thing, this "Project Discovery." I know it's no easy thing to face even one heckler in an audience, yet alone 100 or 150. I ask you and your players only to bear in mind the 400 or 500 or 600 others watching first class drama for the first time, done by a first class company, and liking it.

(from an English professor's letter to
Adrian Hall)

I am writing to tell you how much my students and I enjoyed Saint Joan and to acknowledge the generosity of one of your actors who attended several of my classes and entertained and educated my students. My students and I express our appreciation for his interesting talk about Saint Joan and the theatre in general.

As I understand it, Marius came on his own time. It is encouraging to see a person give up his free time through enthusiasm for his occupation and the education of our youth.

Again, thank you for the fine performance and Marius Mazmanian.

(from a teacher's letter to Trinity Square)

I have just returned from the R.I.S.D. Auditorium where I saw the play Saint Joan. I was so very moved by this play and especially by your performance that I had to sit down and write to you, thanking you for making Saint Joan not only a cultural experience but an enjoyable one, as well.

Many of my friends attend ______ and it was from them that I first heard how great it was. Of course, I also read the many newspaper reviews. None of what I heard or what I read could compare with what I felt watching Saint Joan. Our teacher played us part of the record of Saint Joan by way of preparation. Each and every one of us looked forward to attending the play. I think the whole cast did a tremendous job, although I don't know much about it, but I think that as St. Joan you were entirely believable. In fact, during the part where you were tried before the judges in Scene VI, I sobbed through the whole scene. Much to the disgust of everyone else I left the auditorium with a dirty, swollen, streaked, red face! I enjoyed it tremendously and hope I will have another oppoortunity to see you. You are, in my opinion, a very fine actress.

(from a student's letter to a Trinity Square actress)

I would like to thank you and your company for the wonderful production of Saint Joan that I had the pleasure to see yesterday. A teacher, to be effective, must be a good actor. To see your group perform before a mixed audience of students, and to capture their attention confirms my conviction. I only hope that I can be as successful.

May you have continued success in your future productions.

(from a teacher's letter to Trinity Square)

I recently saw the play Saint Joan and to my knowledge you are the one responsible for this. In my opinion the players were superb although I believe that Saint Joan should have been a girl with a little more dynamic personality. Someone with a more louder and clearer voice.

I also wish to point out that scene IV was somewhat drawn out. The dialogue was far to long and soon lost the listener's attention. Of course, you know that I'm not saying anything against the actors, for they spoke and acted well. The costumes and scenery were something to brag about, no one could find any fault whatsoever. The scenery brought about an atmosphere that put the listener right in the play itself. All and all I would like to give you my thanks for allowing us to see this play.

(from a student's letter to Trinity Square)

I went to see the Saint Joan of Ark play with my school a few weeks ago and I don't mind saying it was very good. In my opinion the acting was sensational. This was my first experience with plays and I hope it won't be my last. I am looking forward to seeing your next play Ah, Wilderness!

(from a student's letter to Trinity Square)

[Shaw's Saint Joan], despite its greatness, was a poor choice for such a performance. It lasted for nearly 3 1/2 hours, terminating at 4:30, not 3:30 as represented by the official notice sent to our school about transportation arrangements. Moreover, its abstract discussion of political and theological subjects requires considerable preparation on the part of students before the performance, for which materials were not available in time, and uninterrupted concentration under virtually perfect conditions during it.

Audience noise, namely, uncontrolled talking by students in the orchestra and especially in the balcony made it impossible to hear, much less follow, a large portion of the dialogue.

Inappropriate demonstrations, including whistles, catcalls, "raspberries," stamping, ill-timed applause and laughter, disrupted the performance and reduced to farce some of the more moving moments in the last two scenes of the play.

While many of our students indicated by a show of hands that they enjoyed the performance of St. Joan, classroom discussion revealed that the more sensitive and better students who had some knowledge of the theatre and/or were familiar with St. Joan felt that the performance was ruined for them by the audience reaction. Certainly it is not the purpose of the program to introduce one portion of the audience to the pleasures of theatregoing while destroying the value of this experience for others.

Accordingly, we wish to make the following recommendations with respect to future performances pursuant to this program:

That there be no prefatory remarks by a member of the company prior to the performance. Remarks at both Twelfth Night and St. Joan were patronizing and in bad taste, being quite inappropriate to a serious theatre environment; and at St. Joan especially they were an invitation to, if not an unqualified license for, bad behavior, as the speaker closed with the thrice-repeated exhortation, broken by long dramatic pauses to let the whistles, laughter, and jeers subside, "Above all... above all... above all, enjoy yourselves!"

That a major effort be made immediately to rehabilitate this situation by exploring the possibility of educating students as to appropriate behavior in the theatre. This effort should, of course, take place in the participating schools. It is suggested that the Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford, Connecticut, be contacted for help in the light of the comparatively favorable conduct of student audiences reported there, many of them from underprivileged areas of New York City. Certainly if there is to be a repetition of the mass misbehavior experienced at Twelfth Night and St. Joan [we] will have little further interest in the program.

(from an English department chairman's
memorandum to Project Discovery)

I am an ______________ High School Senior who attended your morning performance of *Saint Joan* on Tuesday, November 1, in the program for secondary school systems in Rhode Island. I thought it necessary to express my appreciation and pleasure in the moving performance. As the actors and actresses must have noticed, some elements of the audience were unruly, if not downright rude and discourteous. I was ashamed to be a part of such an audience, but I still wanted to show you that some of us did enjoy, really *love*, the performance and I hope that the disturbance was caused by a small few whose reasons for such rudeness I cannot understand. Because actors must find concentration very difficult (impossible?) in a noisy audience, I wanted to suggest that the performances to school students be placed on a voluntary basis. In any case, I want to thank you for your performance and hope that you do not discontinue the program.

(from a student's letter to Adrian Hall)

On behalf of the members of the _____ High School Drama Club, I wish to extend to you and the members of the Trinity Square Repertory Company our gratitude for the opportunity you gave to the cast of "One With the Flame" to discuss theatre with professional actors. The generous gift of time, extracted from your overwhelming schedule, was deeply appreciated.

I know that your production of *St. Joan* greatly impressed the entire student body at our high school.

(from a student's letter to Trinity Square)

Last week I attended your play *Ah, Wilderness!* It was the first one of your plays I have attended, and it was also the first play I have ever seen in my life. I really thought it was great. I hope to be able to attend more of your plays as a school function, and perhaps on my own sometimes in the near future.

(from a student's letter to Trinity Square)

The production [of *Ah, Wilderness!*] was lacking in clarity and focus; somewhat busy, over-blocked, over-propped, and lacking in directorial cohesion. There was a director's substitution of energy for activity to give the appearance of vitality, but inner life seemed to be lacking nevertheless. There was lack of drive and rhythmically it suffered from lack of changes of pace and dynamics. The audience was often obliged to strain to hear, understand, or become involved.

Technically a handsome, somewhat stodgy production. Theatricality and wit were sacrificed to authenticity and weight, so that the audiences' imagination was not stimulated. Lighting and music both excellent. Costumes tended to the pedestrian. Too literal.

The audience was, for the most part, extremely attentive and involved, although I felt it required a conscientious effort on its part, rather than an irresistible engagement. The students were very alert to any coyness or falseness on the actors' part, and very alive to penetrating and subtle acting. The reactions were occasionally vocal, both in approval and disapproval, but their general deportment was exemplary. It is a mistake to consider silence attention, and a certain amount of spontaneous vocalization is both desirable and healthy, when it doesn't interfere with others' concentration. On the whole the students were stimulated, although there was a tendency on the part of the director to patronize his audience, in his selection of readings, character interpretations and activities. This tendency invariably met with the students' disdain.

I think more imagination, less expenditure of energy, time and money on the physical production, more daring and experimentation, less authenticity and playing it safe, will result in more exciting theatre, both for performers and audience.

(from the notes of a director of another resident company, visiting Trinity Square)

I really don't know where to start but all I can think of is what you must think of [our] high school. I attended the performance with the Junior class, and I enjoyed it very much. I was quite alarmed to hear how your company was treated and I must apologize for the Sophomores' actions. It was nothing but ignorance, shown on the part of a few that disgraced the whole Sophomore class and [our] high school.

Our school wasn't the only one acting up, but this is still no excuse. My feelings are shared among my class members that this disgraceful showing doesn't in anyway show the true behavior of [our] high school. Everyone I talked with said the play was excellent. We really appreciated the fine showmanship displayed by your company.

We are hoping this very unfortunate incident can somehow be forgiven and find it in your hearts to think of [our] high school as a school that appreciated the play very much. Again we loved the performance and beg your forgiveness.

(from a student's letter to Trinity Square)

There are a few moments in a person's life when he can say, "I have discovered truth. My joy is all consuming." One of these moments came today for 250 students and teachers at _____ School.

The "truth" appeared to us in the person of Joanna Featherstone and in her magnificent and inspired presentation of Negro poetry. Not until today have I seen a teen-age audience give a spontaneous standing ovation to anything, nor do I think they have had as just a reason for doing so.

(from a teacher's letter to Trinity Square)

Thank you so much for speaking at our assembly. Your review of A Midsummer Night's Dream, which we will see later in March, was very well received by both our faculty and student body.

I enjoyed so much talking to you after the assembly; the conversation has made me think more intensely about a career in the theatre.

(from a student letter to a Trinity Square actress)

I know of a certain person who became wiser to the world. She has a better opinion of things. She is a lot easier to live with. I don't know why, but even she says it was Project Discovery that changed her.

(from a student's comment)

I don't think the plays were worth going to. The only reason some kids went was just to smoke in the lavatory. I thought the whole thing stunk.

(from a student's comment)

Congratulations on the fine performance of Julius Caesar! Our students were first of all very grateful to receive individual copies of the play. We studied the play in detail beforehand and so were able to fully appreciate the speeches and comments made by each actor. I think the girls were amazed to discover that Shakespeare could be exciting and so much fun. Their reaction was enthusiastic and thus a delight to us, teachers. Rarely have we seen so fine a performance.

(from a school principal's letter to Adrian Hall)

A word of praise for the fine organization of Project Discovery!

We all enjoyed Julius Caesar tremendously! A truly fine performance! The use of present-day personalities is most effective. The stage setting is both original and refreshing. Please pass on our congratulations to the cast, director, set designer, etc.

(from a teacher's report)

Please convey to Mr. Adrian Hall and the entire company the most enthusiastic congratulations of our principal, of our staff, and of our student body for a truly thrilling production of Julius Caesar. It is a masterful piece of work.

Thanks for a most stimulating experience.

(from an English department chairman's letter to Project Discovery)

Recently we had the experience of hearing and seeing Joanna Featherstone. Her recital of negro poetry was very exciting. Our children, as I am sure is often the case, are not particularly used to poetry, less accustomed to negro artists and certainly totally unaware of a literary heritage that is theirs, apart from spirituals. They were very moved, enlightened, delighted and changed children when she finished. She had opened a door of experience and understanding that few would have been able to bridge. She is wonderful!

(from a headmaster's letter to Miss Rose Vallely)

The thing Project Discovery has done for me is to make me a lot more interested in the "classics." I don't think I can ever become an actress, but I should like to try my best.

(from a student's comment)

Saw preview of Brother to Dragons. Full house, largely students and young adults. Play is drastically cut from published version of the poem. The production is brilliant. Kids should be seeing this one. Would blow their minds.

(from a staff member's notes)

Brother to Dragons is basically the story of how two brothers, Lilburn and Isham, murder a slave. The two brothers happen to be the nephews of Thomas Jefferson. In the play, one sees prejudice, apathy and terror. There is prejudice on the part of the brothers and the general community, apathy in the form of Jefferson, and terror resulting from the character's actions. The story is both gripping and exciting, but it is deep in meaning, too.

As is usually true, the Trinity Square Repertory Company did a splendid job in putting together this production. The staging, lighting and sound effects were of the highest standards. Both the costumes and various props (ranging from slabs of raw meat to buckets of apples) were well used and effective. On the whole, the complete staging arrangements were excellent.

All in all, Brother to Dragons proved to be a play that was well worth seeing. Robert Penn Warren's excellent writing, blended with the Trinity Square Repertory Company's talent, made it an immediate success.

(from a student newspaper review of a Trinity Square production for adult audiences)

Robert Penn Warren's Brother to Dragons was originally a rather dull play. However, the Trinity Square Repertory Company, under direction of Adrian Hall, has brought the story vibrantly to life.

...This is the story; what makes the play so memorable is the method of it's presentation. It is a nightmare in which time is surrealistically suspended; that is, the events portrayed have already happened, are happening now, and will continue to happen.

Such is the impact of the nightmare that the entire theater is emotionally united and involved in the act of murder. And yet, despite the tremendous emotional shock, one still finds it intellectually conceivable.

(from a school newspaper review of a Trinity Square production for adult audiences)

We have felt here that Project Discovery is one of the finest things that has happened to education in this area in a long, long time, and this feeling was never stronger than when we witnessed the reaction of our students to The Importance of Being Earnest. It is gratifying to see that the universality of appeal of great drama may still be demonstrated. We as teachers could never hope to achieve an appreciation of Oscar Wilde comparable to that reached by one performance of your production. Congratulations to Mr. Butler and the company. Please extend our thanks to them.

May we anticipate many more such treats in the future.

(from an English department chairman's letter to Project Discovery)

I would like to express my enjoyment at seeing the recent play, The Importance of Being Earnest. I read the play beforehand and thought it excellent, as are all of Oscar Wilde's plays; but my reading couldn't compare with the play as you staged it. You made the characters come alive somehow.

In short, I thought the play was the best (except for Julius Caesar) I've ever seen.

(from a student's letter to a Trinity Square actor)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your delightful cast for the most amusing presentation of the play The Importance of Being Earnest which you presented to my school. I enjoyed the play very much and I'm sure the rest of the students who attended did also.

The characters personalities were perfectly portrayed especially those of Gwendolen and Algy. In trying to remember the person I enjoyed most in the play I find it impossible to decide. This is because everyone performed his part so well.

(from a student's letter to Project Discovery)

Yesterday I went with my school to see Enemy of the People. I enjoyed it so much. The acting was tremendous and the sets were so good but there was one thing that bothered me. It was one part of audience. They made noise and booed and laughed during the whole play. Everyone from my school felt so bad about the way that group of "smart guys" acted. It must be so hard to perform in front of such an unappreciative audience. I wanted to write to you just to say that it is only a small minority who don't realize all that you are doing for us.

(from a student's letter to Trinity Square)

Comments among students were to the effect that they liked this type of play [An Enemy of the People], as it had a meaning and a moral to it.

(from our coordinator's notes)

[Red Roses for Me] was a disappointment. I saw the entire play twice (and the ending two additional times). The first audience was made up of upper-middle class high school students and the play contended with the last game of the World Series for their attention. The second group was twenty years older and was voluntarily appearing at the black tie opening. The differences in performance and audience reaction were equally apparent. Both appeared enthusiastic although there was a fairly constant hum from the student audience except during the final scene with Brennan. The students, however, reacted more strongly than the adults at several points. Bill Cain drew applause with his first entrance. The breaking of the cross brought audible exclamations from the students but not from the adults. Conversely, a few of the adults applauded at the mention of "law and order" but the students did not react. The students applauded more loudly for the young hero than their grownup counterparts. The accoustics and poor projection made it impossible for me, sitting in the center, to hear about 15-20% of the dialogue during the student performance, but this improved significantly on opening night.

(from a staff member's notes)

Students enjoyed particularly the performance of Richard Kneeland as Macbeth. The comic performance of the witches was received enthusiastically. This is the ninth performance I have chaperoned, and it is the first time I have seen a standing ovation at the final curtain.

(from a teacher's report)

A boy in one of my slowest groups who I had been persuading all week to come to the play (some of the problem kids usually threaten to skip school the day of the play) came to me on the bus and thanked me for convincing him to see the play [Macbeth]. He was enthusiastic about it.

(from a teacher's report)

The Trinity Square Repertory Company's presentation of "Macbeth" does not fulfill my expectations as to the dramatic capabilities of this great Shakespearean tragedy. But I still found it enjoyable because it clarified many obscure scenes and gave the play a unity I didn't perceive when I read it.

The major reason for this dramatic lacking is characterization. Not all were bad but many of the major roles were weakly portrayed. Richard Kneeland did not relate the impression of an ambitious murderer.

....The new techniques introduced by Adrian Hall were very good. The set, costumes, and lighting were effective. The extended stage and scaffolds brought the play to the audience, literally.

In general, the play was not as good as it could have been, but it was enjoyable.

(from a student's letter to Trinity Square)

Enthusiastic reaction to the unusual interpretation of the three witches [in Macbeth]. Play was made more exciting by the appearance of actors from all parts of the theatre, including down from the ceiling, and by the possibility of accidents, due to the dangerous looking careening of the actors along the rafters, etc. One actor slipped off a ramp and fell into the audience. (Very exciting.)

(from a teacher's report)

Adrian's *Macbeth* is brilliant theatre. The students were completely responsive. Adrian originally had not wanted to do a Shakespeare and considered *Macbeth* a necessary chore for the sake of school-theatre relations. But his visit to Scotland last summer, where he met Grotowski, apparently has turned Adrian and his company on. They have really hit their stride. What they are giving the kids now is a purely theatrical experience, one that cannot be had any other way. They are no longer competing with cinerama.

(from a staff member's notes)

I never before went to a play until Project Discovery and now I want to go to everyone that is put on. Since I'm graduating this year, next year I'll have to go on my own and pay, but it's worth any amount. I would much rather see the same play a second time than go to a movie. I signed up for the "workshop" on Saturday mornings, too. I'm looking forward to the first meeting and hope that I will see you there....

(from a student's letter to Trinity Square)

After we returned to the high school most of the kids stood around in groups excitedly discussing the individual performers. I think they were more receptive to *Macbeth* than to any other performance we have seen. They absolutely loved it.

(from a teacher's report)

The audience was very enthusiastic. I talked to about a half a dozen of the students and three of the teachers and they definitely felt *Macbeth* was much more acceptable than anything they had previously experienced with Shakespeare. Some felt that the setting had a great deal to do with the whole play.

One teacher commented that absenteeism was well down on this day and she felt the play was the reason.

(from a teacher's report)

Please accept my thanks, those of the entire English department, as well as the gratitude of the students of the high school, for your cooperation and kindness in sending us Miss Helmond and Mr. Kneeland yesterday. If every teacher in this building could command such rapt attention for the required 180 school days, this would be an Utopia for the educational system.

That which pleased everyone was the fact that during the question and answer portion of the discussion, no student's question was answered hastily, without care, or in a condescending manner. The very special solicitude shown by both our visitors for the students was remarkable.

We really must have a return performance. This sort of influence by far exceeds the everyday classroom instruction which, in spite of our best efforts, can very well become sterile. One student remarked that if Miss Helmond could teach a literature class no one would find the material "dry." How true.

(from an English department chairman's
letter to Trinity Square)

On Saturday morning we attended a workshop being held at RISD for interested students--one in a series of six. Actually, there were three simultaneous workshops, and I watched the one on directing. Somewhere between fifty and seventy-five students, perhaps three-quarters of them female, were in attendance. It was a session of the sort that leads one to think that maybe the theatre people should be given charge of the educational function. The young man running the session gave a brilliant display of indirective teaching, and I have rarely seen students so utterly rapt and involved in learning. Oddly, the two workshops scheduled for teachers are to be largely lecture, though the teachers certainly need to be involved in the sorts of activities these students were pursuing.

(from a staff member's notes)

I think it may have influenced the students in my class along with my teacher in the sense we have a general discussion about all aspects of the play instead of hearing the teacher ramble on. At least this way we keep the class on a group participation system instead of a totalitarian system of teaching. It definitely improves English in the "plays" department anyway. Now try for new teaching methods for students and teachers, even if it only in the "plays" department.

(from a student's comment)

Our students have just returned from their trip to Providence and your Project presentation of Macbeth.

They are bubbling over with enthusiasm for their experience...they are usually blase, being fairly well versed in Shakespeare. They were unstinted in their praise of the performance.

(from a school superintendent's letter
to Trinity Square)

Personally, I found Macbeth to be slightly top-heavy with theatrical tricks, but continually exciting and, from an English teacher's viewpoint, endlessly interesting.

(from an English department chairman's report)

Macbeth was a rare and exciting theatrical experience. The students showed their approval with a standing ovation at the end.

(from a staff member's notes)

Enthralled? Entertained? Informed? Inspired? Motivated? About eighty students and several faculty members were all this and more after Bill Cain's visit to our high school yesterday. We are truly grateful to you, to the Trinity Square Repertory Co. for having made possible an afternoon long to be remembered. Our admiration for Project Discovery's immeasurable contribution to the cultural life of Rhode Island continues to mount to ever greater proportions and our appreciation equally. Thank you very much for our share at ______ High School.

(from a high school counselor's letter to Project Discovery)

The students from my opinion, were thoroughly excited with the performance of Macbeth. Their reactions were extremely "loud" and the reaction, afterwards, was very stimulating.

(from a teacher's report)

The audience is surrounded by this play [Macbeth] and make an actual part of the action, and there is plenty of action. The costumes are wonderful, the setting and lighting exceptional. I can't find any fault except I did not like the kerosene lamps that they used.... My own reactions are that I can really appreciate Shakespeare done in this manner and I am more than sure our students are going to react very very favorably.

(from our Coordinator's notes)

The agility, vitality, and excitement of the Trinity Square Repertory Company was well-harnessed in their production of Macbeth. From the very beginning, when three grotesque witches come screaming across the stage, to the end, when Macbeth is butchered to death by a troop of men, one is not even given time enough to blink. This continuous surge of excitement is held throughout the whole play.

There are many things which help to make up such a dramatic and forceful production. One is undoubtedly the use of the stage. The cast had at their disposal a tremendous spider web of scaffolding extending out into and past the audience. Like small children let loose in an olympic gymnasium, the cast ran, jumped, climbed, swung, and popped out of every small corner and passageway on this stage. The audience soon found themselves constantly shifting their heads in order to see all the action. By the end of the play, I'm sure they were as exhausted as the players.

Adrian Hall blended the limitless stage with the company's unleashed strength, and produced a Macbeth that was thrilling and rich with excitement.

(from a student newspaper review)

I cannot imagine any high school child who saw Macbeth not feeling excited about Shakespeare--what a shame it would be to deny the children coming along the chance to be so stimulated.

(from a "citizen's" endorsement of
Project Discovery)

I have become a member of the Dramatics Club here at ______. When I go to see one of the plays that the company presents, I try to notice their movements, speech, dialect and facial expressions. These actors and actresses are so good that they themselves can influence others.

(from a student's report)

At the curtain call [Macbeth] the audience gave a spontaneous standing cheering ovation. The cast in turn gave the audience great applause. All in all this was a performance day to be remembered by all, despite two different type audiences. This is what Project Discovery has done in three years.

(from our Coordinator's notes)

I observed three classrooms where Shakespeare was being taught. I was disappointed by the teaching I saw. Not that it was bad; it was competent in all three cases. But not once did I hear a teacher make reference to the production of Macbeth the students had just seen or were about to see or call on the students to use their theatre going experience to talk about the play under discussion. And there was little evidence that the Lab. theatre had changed the way these teachers approach drama.

In the lunchroom several English teachers expressed dissatisfaction with Adrian's interpretation of *Macbeth*. "Too bloody," said one. "The ending diminishes Macbeth's tragic stature," said another. They admire Adrian's theatrical genius, but question his right to make Shakespeare so groovy. The students at ________ obviously felt differently: They are reported to have also given a standing ovation, and I overheard a science teacher talking to a teacher of special education asking "Did you see *Macbeth* yesterday?" It seems his students had arrived on his class that morning still chattering about their experience, and he felt left out. Later when I talked with him for a few moments he told me he felt Project Discovery had been really good for the kids.

Teachers at both schools were strongly behind the project and vitally interested in the progress of the "Save Project Discovery" movement. Several of them were actively engaged in local efforts to put pressure on the community and school board to find funds for next year. At _______ the student council had, on its own initiative, constructed and distributed a questionnaire about student attitudes towards the projects' future. All this interest seems to bode well for local support during year four.

(from a staff member's notes)

Most students at ______ High School have attended and thoroughly enjoyed the performances of Project Discovery plays this year and last year. However, it is our understanding that some preparation is supposed to be provided in advance by the Trinity Square Repertory Company so that teachers and students may have a better understanding of the action and the play. In fact, teachers had no advance preparation and the folders with information about the play were delivered to teachers two weeks after the students saw "Billy Budd."

It is our understanding that Project Discovery also provided a Traveling Road Show. One of those was called "Willie's Killers." There are 2,250 students at _______ and only about 200 students heard a monologue given by one actor. A man came to school one Friday morning the first period of the day and left after a less than one hour performance. We would like to know if Trinity Square thinks it has fullfilled its obligations to the other 2,050 students and to the government which supported this project?

(from an editorial in a student newspaper)

The students were very enthusiastic when they hung Billy Budd....

(from an observer's report)

Billy Budd is just great. Another success for Trinity and Project Discovery. My feeling is that the play is well cast and well executed.

(from our Coordinator's notes)

Attended student performance of Billy Budd on Wednesday morning. Didn't watch the students for reaction as much as usual--was too engrossed in the play! Brilliantly staged and acted, and, especially, produced with great clarity. I came away from the performances I saw feeling "good" about Billy Budd himself, hanging up there in the arms of the sweet Jesus! A great experience. Kept wishing my own boys could see it.

(from a staff member's notes)

Attended the student workshop in the theatre on Saturday morning. Approximately 200 kids showed up. The rapport being established between the actors and the students is excellent. Ron Frazier, Richard Pinter, Bob Colonna, Bill Damkoehler, and Bill Cain are all keen about these occasions and are doing some real teaching. It is encouraging to see so many kids coming here on Saturdays voluntarily.

(from a staff member's notes)

I feel that Project Discovery has been most beneficial to the students in my classes. By attending the plays, many of them have developed an appreciation of drama and an interest in it which no amount of teaching could have effected.

(from an English teacher's comments)

Project Discovery is excellent for all students, and particularly for the culturally disadvantaged children.

(from a mathematics teacher's comments)

Our youth are being exposed to so much of the violence and non-directional philosophy on television, the newsprints, and in their own culture. What I have seen at Project Discovery for the past two years has been superb, thought provoking, and has cut through the superficial veneer of life to the nitty gritty. This should be continued by all means.

(from a Protestant Minister's endorsement of Project Discovery)

My daughters have really enjoyed this program.

(from a homemaker's endorsement of Project Discovery)

I believe 'project discovery' to be of immense importance in the teaching of English & Drama. As a result of this program we have begun a drama club which has produced several plays in its first year, one of which placed 4th in state competition. All this in our first year of state competition!!

(from a history teacher's comments)

I also believe that Rhode Island's 'student audiences' have matured immensely since the initial experiences. It's a wonderful opportunity and experience for high school students. This is a very 'down-to-earth' program for advancing literary and artistic standards.

(from a music teacher's comments)

Project Discovery is one of the best investments ever made by U.S. Government Funds.

(from an English teacher's comments)

In particular I believe many students and teachers obtained a new interest and/or expanded interest in the art of theater. This was shown when taking a group to N.Y.; many students wished to attend a play rather than sight-see.

(from a business teacher's comments)

Project Discovery has been a high point of our school experience for many. Project Rhode Show brought the theater, its excitement, verve and variety into our classrooms.

(from comments by a Headmaster of a private school)

Project Discovery has obviously been a very exciting, stimulating, and beneficial educational opportunity for our students. For this reason alone it must be continued. In addition, it provides the opportunity to create an audience upon which the future cultural life of this community depends.

(from a Journalist's endorsement of Project Discovery)

After studying Macbeth from a traditional point of view, the students were exposed to Mr. Hall's presentation. The obvious contrast heightened discussions and served as a springboard for future exchanges involving such elementary questions as 'If you were the director, how would you present this scene?'

The students learned to accept different points of view, different presentations and to ascertain the value of each.

(from an English teacher's comments)

At a time when the national conscience is preoccupied with providing American youth with the soundest, most relevant education--one that meets academic, social, and cultural needs--it seems to me, that Project Discovery is doing just this. And doing it successfully. I know because Project Discovery has provided an indispensable academic and cultural resource to me as a teacher, and most important, to my students. It must be continued in Rhode Island.

(from an English teacher's endorsement
of Project Discovery)

I think that Project Discovery is one of the best cultural programs for schools that I have ever seen. The acting is really good, the students are enthusiastic about the plays, and the constant new services being offered by this Project Discovery group are heartily appreciated. We want to take advantage of everything they have to offer us. It would be a thousand pities if this program were to be dropped.

(from comments by a Directress of
Studies of a Catholic academy)

The program has provided an experience which could not be achieved in the classroom. The medium of drama has come alive, from textbook to reality. Project Discovery is an invaluable friend.

(from a teacher's comments)

Due to the country's present concern for relevancy in teaching, I feel that the discontinuation of "Project Discovery" could be a tremendous setback in education. The live performances cannot be equalled by the teaching of a play in class; the visual and auditory experiences on stage cannot be touched in the classroom.

(from an English teacher's endorsement
of Project Discovery)

The change in students' attitudes towards live theatre has been, if I may, dramatic. I am convinced that the only real way to bring this about is through their actually seeing real actors doing 'their thing.' I'm personally damned unhappy about its demise.

(from a history teacher's comments)

It would have been my suggestion that the theatre should be brought to the student rather than the student to the theatre--until he could become more familiar with the purposes.

(from a principal's comments)

Project Discovery performances were my first experience of professional drama and stage productions. These gave me a better appreciation for this art. If I can compare my experience and cultural betterment to that of our students who may not relish other phases of literature (books, especially) I am certain that Project Discovery has proved to be a positive factor in their comprehensive education. Given the milieu of our school and the class of children we teach, the theatre was an unknown factor in the lives of our students before P.D. Now, we can hope that, at least if they don't attend performances on their own, their experience will allow them to be more open minded with regards to the art, that it is for all people and not just intellectuals!

(from a business teacher's comments)

I think the entire program was executed with good taste and as expeditiously as possible. If possible, a "preview" by players given in the schools might enhance the program further.

(from a principal's comments)

Project Discovery has been the best experiment that I have witnessed in all my teaching years. It has been a source of culture for myself and the students. Each year it has improved and enriched our programs in English.

(from an English teacher's comments)

Now is the time to work on this to make certain that this wonderful Program continues. If it ever stops--it is so much harder to reactivate. Even if it is necessary to put other important Projects aside for a year--this has to be successful NOW.

(from a homemaker's endorsement of
Project Discovery)

The in-school services of Project Discovery have brought to our school some of the most exciting and stimulating learning experiences I have seen in any school setting.

(from comments by the Headmaster of a private boy's school)

Project Discovery is a worthwhile program but I don't believe that it should be made available completely cost free. It should operate on a matching contributory basis whereby the students attend productions for a low realistic fee with gov't matching funds. Cost free gov't programs are not valued by students as anything that comes easy or 'free' has little value.

Project Discovery day at our high school became a 'day off' for 50% of the school. 50% of the school were absent on these days! The program's administration should be probed.

(from a music teacher's comments)

I have been very much impressed with the students' reaction to this program. They have participated with enthusiasm and interest.

(from a principal's comments)

This is one of the best means we have of interesting students in live theatre, and through it, literature. Project Discovery provides the springboard leading to class interest, discussion, and eventual attendance at other theatre shows, including movies as well as plays. Live theatre is more easily kept alive, and the stimulus to attend the theatre more easily motivated because of P.D.

(from an English teacher's endorsement of Project Discovery)

Nothing in our curriculum could come close to achieving the high degree of interest in the theatre and its literature than Project Discovery. The reaction of the majority of the students has been repeatedly positive. Even those students who are not literary minded have been stimulated by the sensory impact of being involved in live theatre.

In our school, the student body has supported a student-faculty organized committee to encourage the city to help sustain 'Project Discovery'.

One side effect of Project Discovery in Rhode Island is the increased interest in quality high school theatre. Students here, no longer satisfied with plays like 'Our Miss Brooks' and 'Meet Corlis Archer' have begun experimenting with Albee and Pinter. As our first main production of the past season, we mounted A Hatful of Rain by Gazzo. It was very well received.

(from a history teacher's comments)

The complete emphasis placed on the sciences with federal grants and the total lack of expenditures for the arts is an exasperating inequity in our educational system. The basis of all humanity and culture since the early Greeks has been the theatre and our state was greatly privileged to participate in this great intellectual and stimulating experience, Project Discovery. Our governments expend vast billions for destruction and to subsidize the rich (i.e. oil depletion) but refuses to expend the funds necessary to develop its greatest asset--the intellectual man. It is imperative that this Project be continued no matter what the expense involved.

(from a student's (honest!) letter to
the Governor of Rhode Island)

I have noted the program's effectiveness. Too often, what is discussed in the classroom and what is real are far removed. This program has offered the unique opportunity for plays that are read and discussed to be viewed by the students. This, in effect, brings closer to the students the actualities of interpretation, direction, and production.

(from a student's letter to Project
Discovery)

The students have found Shakespearean productions superior to those at Stratford, Conn.

(from a teacher's comments)

The value of Project Discovery is twofold. First, it has given me a greater insight into drama which helps to make me a better teacher. Second, it has changed the attitude of the students in that characters in a play and "dry" words have become alive and vibrant. "Literature is life" now has a significant meaning to the students. They have been able to see it.

(from an English teacher's endorsement
of Project Discovery)

We think it was and is a great educational project. Some of the best teaching anywhere took place in our school when Trinity Square actors and actresses came and worked in front of and with our students.

(from a principal's comments)

Project Discovery has given our students the opportunity to witness a production that they would normally not see on their own. Yet I do not believe that it has stimulated interest in plays. Our school play (May, 1969) actually drew less this year than last year if this proves to be any barometer. I do not believe that the students by and large would go on their own to see a play. Yet they enjoy seeing a play on class time.

(from a history teacher's comments)

It has proven effective. It is nationally significant. It attracts educated and skilled persons to Rhode Island. It guarantees a more cultured citizenry. It is the most economical educational and cultural program imaginable. It should not discontinue at the very moment when it is about to have maximum impact in a new theatre.

(from a college president's endorsement of Project Discovery)

[The plays] have opened my mind to another world. Please keep Project Discovery so they may do the same for future students.

(from a student's letter to Project Discovery)

From the time it first began, Trinity has added a great deal to my life in Providence. Now it is doing the same for my high school daughter. Its great virtue is that it dows not compromise, at least not much. To the extent that Project Discovery brings this kind of theater to children who would not otherwise see it, it is a fine thing. It fully deserves state and local support and should accept it if it can do so without accepting state control or restriction.

(from a newspaper editor's endorsement of Project Discovery)

Project Discovery offers so much especially to the culturally deprived area such as ours. We do hope there is some way to continue the program.

(from an English department chairman's report)

I was greatly dismayed upon hearing of the discontinuance of Project Discovery. I have felt, as a great many students and teachers have, that this program is worthwhile, entertaining and rich in cultural values. However, I am sure that the administration of this state is most flexible in matters concerning public opinion. I sincerely hope that this letter may be earnestly considered and that the fate of Project Discovery may be changed.

(from a student's letter to the Governor of Rhode Island)

At our school, Project Discovery has been an overwhelming success. Not only have the students become interested in our readings based upon Project Discovery, but a new interest in the dramatic arts has accompanied our participation in this program. We now have more youngsters active in our school's dramatic program--many of these youngsters had previously shown no interest in any other school extra-curricular activity. Trinity Square's Saturday workshops further heightened this interest.

This program should most definitely be continued, for it may have 'salvaged' a few lost youngsters. My only suggestion would be that perhaps local English teachers could have yet more of an influence in the selection of material presented in the program. But again, Project Discovery is superb and ought to be continued since it has had a definite positive influence on our students.

(from a French teacher's comments)

Project Discovery has had no effect on my life. But, I did enjoy the plays.

(from a student's comments on a questionnaire)

As parents of a high school student, we have been most impressed by the student interest in Project Discovery. We think it should be continued by all means.

(from otherwise unidentified parents' endorsement of Project Discovery)

My daughter is delighted with everything she has learned at the Workshop. I do hope it continues for many years to come.

(from a homemaker's endorsement of Project Discovery)

...the majority of students (90-95%) who attend are very enthusiastic. They seem to learn many new things, ask questions about incidents that they are unfamiliar with (This is true of students that usually don't participate in discussions), and receive much cultural value and entertainment.

(from a business teacher's comments)

After reading Macbeth, Julius Caesar, etc., I knew from being told again and again their greatness. I accepted this, but for me and many others, the pages were just jumbles of meaningless dialogue, immortal perhaps, but senseless. At Project Discovery, the scene took on three dimensions, the characters became real and my life and theirs was one.

(from a student's letter to Project Discovery)

From the point of view of a teacher of History, many of the productions --e.g. Billy Budd, Julius Caesar, Enemy of the People--were excellent in defining issues for discussion.

The changes in student attitudes toward the theatre has been remarkable. The first few plays were interrupted by talking and occasional incidents of throwing objects. Now, however, the audience has become far more sophisticated.

(from a history teacher's comments)

To say we enjoy the plays is an understatement, however on our own, I doubt we would ever go to a play for reasons of the cost and mostly that it just isn't done or even encouraged. Please keep this Project Discovery alive and, if possible, increase the frequency of our going.

(from a student's letter to Project Discovery)

The P.D. productions and the almost unbelievable wealth of available lectures and free materials have become, for me, a practically indispensable part of my English program.

(from an English teacher's comments)

Basing my judgement on the responses of average and above average students, I feel P.D. has been the most stimulating and effective single educational experience in the humanities that they have been exposed to.

(from a high school counselor's endorsement of Project Discovery)

Students, particularly from the deprived areas--were confused, concerned and, to put it mildly, disturbed, at the first performance. The only 'live' T.V. recording. Since they had no flowers, like the 'movies' give to star performers they threw life savers--candy bars--and some silver coins on the stage at curtain call!!!! Two years and several performances later the same students discussed colors, tones of voices and were very critical of Macbeth because they had a difficult time turning their heads around to the back--and lost some of the action and words. The cultural background was more than just words, it was a real experience in living and their ideas and imagination were not just stimulated they were transferred to their literature--It didn't help a 'generation gap' but it sure helped a 'century' gap.

(from a high school counselor's comments)

Not being a member of the English department, I cannot measure the total impact of Project Discovery on the students. From the members of my classes I was able to learn that our English instructors had adequately prepared the students prior to their visits.

To evaluate impact on the students of P.D. is rather difficult. Because I felt so strongly about the theater experience I asked several pupils of their reactions immediately after performances and in the ensuing weeks. I wish I could report of magical transformations in glowing terms, but such was not the case. Most of the approximately fifty students I contacted, even though they had been prepared for the plays, seemed to derive very little from the two above mentioned productions. An unfortunate number failed to relate to important specifics or universal themes as early as a week after performances. Remember this was an unofficial sampling on a person-to-person basis. This statement is not a contradiction of the opening remarks. I feel it is a reflection upon our community. In [our town] education is not of greatest premium, and the arts are low man on the appreciation totem pole. We are an industrial town with still too many junior high and high school drop outs--a city where many of its college-educated people leave and never return. Theater discussion was too often considered in terms of 'stuff' on one extreme and perceptive analysis on the other with little or nothing in between. It is only natural for our smartest students to garner the most benefit. However, it was interesting to note that with only one exception the pupils who benefited most were not only the brightest but the more affluent. (Culturally oriented?)

The exception to the above group was a young man who possessed a keen intellect even though he is from a low income group. Even if he was the only person to ever profit from the live theater experience I say it was worth it! Even physical exposure can begin the lowest level of appreciation. It's a raison d'etre! We never know who we reach. Even if a student could only see a single performance in his entire school years, it is an opportunity which should not be compromised!

(from an art teacher's comments)

There should have been more modern plays like Hair, West Side Story. They have plays that tell us what's going on now, we don't care what happened 50 years ago.

(from a student's comments on a questionnaire)

Although the philosophy and objectives of the Project seem sound and of educational and cultural value, I feel that there are several problems. Of primary concern to me is the value of the program viewed in light of its cost. In general I have the feeling that, like many federal programs, most of the money expended is gravy for those who run the program. When one thinks of the teachers, texts teaching aids, classroom space, etc. which could be purchased for the hundreds of thousands of dollars expended, one can only feel that P.D. becomes a frill as well as a source of graft.

In addition, the implementation of the program in Providence has been solely through a repertory company whose work has become repetitious. The success of each production for the goer depends entirely upon whether or not one appreciates, enjoys or understands the taste and interpretations displayed by Mr. Hall. Since he directs all of the productions they all come off looking much alike, eg: pipes for sets, runways to the balcony, people popping up in the back row, an inevitable cannon, bells and much loud screaming.

For these reasons I feel that the Project in Providence is largely a failure since it has not achieved its own stated objectives nor proves its financial worth.

(from a history teacher's comments)

I personally feel that it is the greatest thing that has happened to Rhode Island....

(from a student's letter to Project Discovery)

...Since I first learned about Trinity through Project Discovery, I have become interested in the theatre, and I now work there Saturday nights, ushering...

(from a student's letter to Project Discovery)

To express my opinion of Project Discovery is a difficult one because I have such high regard for it, I can't find the words to adequately praise it.

The appreciation our girls have for the theatre is surprising and gratifying. They have grown to be critical of acting, acoustics, lighting and the play itself. Their easy talk and knowledge of the situation could have grown only from the experience of enjoying Project Discovery. Prior to their exposure to the Trinity Players hardly a girl had attended a stage play--far less 'want to.' Now they take in the same play two and three times, have turned to a 'theatre-going' society (not all, but many). We are ardent fans of the Trinity Players and have taken use of every opportunity to attend workshops directed by them.

I bow my head in shame as I say this, but my students have a much better background and appreciation of drama than I have--and I credit it to Project Discovery. I listen spellbound to student-conducted discussions that take place after viewing a play. I am so pleased and happy at the interest and enthusiasm engendered.

Project Discovery is truly a discovery of what appreciation can be had if art is presented well and with understanding.

(from a Latin teacher's comments)

I would like to thank you for your generous alumni offer, and at the same time tell you how much I enjoy your plays. I happen to be the owner of a season's tichet which I have treasured greatly. This is why I will not be taking advantage of your offer. I hope that many other students will.

I also would like to take this opportunity to thank all the fabulous people who made Project Discovery possible. While I was in high school it brought endless hours of pleasure to me. At the end of last year I had the chance to meet a lot of these people at the workshop that was offered. I cannot begin to tell you how much I looked forward to Saturday mornings. I discovered what a very special group of people they are. It was great to be able to meet some of the people who made the theatre waht it is.

A special thanks to Misters William Cain and William Damkoehler, two of the nicest men I have ever met. I have been waiting to tell them and the rest of you just how I felt and am glad your bulletin gave me the chance.

God Bless You All.

(from a student's letter to Trinity Square)

My only criticism would be the lack of a more open minded approach on the part of teachers & the management re. the plays seen by students--granted, there have been some which certainly should not be made available to a mass audience of young people, but others, such as the Year of the Locust, & Three Penny Opera [done by Trinity Square for adult audiences] would have been quite excellent vehicles for persons who though still in their 'teens certainly are mature enough to take in and appreciate them. Those schools who didn't want their children 'exposed' to some of this are only encouraging a lot of young people to feel that only 'dirty' stuff is representative of modern theatre...

(from a school librarian's comments)

One of the very best ideas to come out of a government mill in years. For the first time even, I saw students take an interest in Shakespeare and come alive to the many wonders of reading, looking and listening. Other plays prompted other questions and discussions about people, places and things off as well as on the stage. A great loss if the program is not continued in someway.

(from a history teacher's comments)

I am almost totally unfamiliar with Project Discovery. I am a compulsive petition-signer.

(from a whimsical student in Boston, on a petition)

Project Discovery has developed in me an interest in the theatre. I always look forward to seeing one of their productions. Knowledge gained from this experience is priceless. I have seen so many good plays as a result of Project Discovery. Please continue this program....I want my little brother to get the chance I had.

(from a student's letter to Project Discovery)

I have found that Project Discovery is about the most successful teaching aid I have experienced. Students who have showed absolutely no interest in any school work have actually become excited after viewing a Project Discovery Production. Younger students with only two or three days preparation are capable of understanding and appreciating the plays. A fantastic program that should never be discontinued.

(from an English teacher's comments)

I can only comment on the reactions of students and teachers who have frequented Project Discovery productions. They usually spend considerable time in class studying the play they are going to see. This is a motivation for students to learn. After the performance they return "bubbling" over--discussing it. It should be retained as an important educational instrument.

(from a guidance director's comments)

...Without this program we would never get acquainted with a play, except a couple through our Literature books, which are very misleading, because they are boring, but seeing it before our eyes gives a meaning to plays.

(from a student's letter to Project Discovery)

My limited experience has been enough to convince me that most students are aware of the fine quality of the performances they've seen, are appreciative about having had the opportunity to witness them, and are quite convinced that the "P.D." program is very enriching.

(from a Catholic priest's endorsement of Project Discovery)

1. A tentative list of plays be sent to teachers as well as others in the community who are often far removed from a classroom situation. Permit teachers of all subjects to comment on the value of the suggested productions not just English teachers.

2. The final list & dates for school attendance be sent to all department chairmen not just the English department plus a single copy of the play text.

3. An effort be made to form a Project Discovery committee in each school involving all disciplines who could plan work relating the plays to each subject matter field.

4. A publication or newsletter form summary of successful integration of the play into the school curriculum. Each school could select one production for this treatment. The responsibility to produce concrete results plus the opportunity to publicize learning situations that succeed might stimulate even the most indolent school system.

These views are obviously those of a Social Studies chairman who believes the Project Discovery program is excellent but was never utilized to its full potential.

(from a history teacher's comments)

Project Discovery was an important happening for my son. PD Theatre Workshop has opened up new dimensions for him. Rarely have I seen him so enthusiastic over any project, (which had my approval too!).

(from a mother's endorsement of Project Discovery)

This program has enabled students of all backgrounds regardless of their financial status to experience the cultural delights of literature brought to life on the stage. Without this program many would lack appreciation for this great source of education and enjoyment.

(from a teacher's letter)

Literature has always been my worst subject. Project Discovery, in a fun way, has taught me literature and helped me understand its value. Now, in my spare time, I write poems, essays and even one-act plays. If it wasn't for the Project Discovery Program, I wouldn't have been able to do better in English, or enjoy my new hobby.

(from a student's letter to Project Discovery)

Many of my students have never seen "live" theatre. The settings have also added a great deal to the enjoyment. I hope "Project Discovery" becomes an integral part of their educational experience.

(from a principal's comments)

The experience of live theatre has been one of the bright moments in our humanities-oriented English classes at our school. You've helped "turn on" the students. In class they have made repeated references to certain plays and dramatic techniques.

(from an English department chairman's letter to Project Discovery)

Judging from the responses of students all over the state of Rhode Island (which I happen to know quite well) this opportunity to experience live theatre (drama) has initiated many into a world new to them which widens horizons and leads to the sometimes startling discovery of relevance, for them, in literature and language; and for those already acquainted with the arts, intensified interest and invaluable enrichment. (Adults are often inclined to wistfully surmise what such an experience might have meant to them.) R.I. is privileged to have this 3-year gift of P.D.: What a pity if we were found wanting--and the students left without.

(from an English teacher's endorsement of Project Discovery)

Parents say that the teen-agers are going wild; that may well be because going to Project Discovery was the only cultural thing left for us to look forward to. I am not saying that Project Discovery is the end of the world...but it sure makes it easier to live with.

(from a student's letter to Project Discovery)

A SAMPLING OF STUDENT, EDUCATOR, AND CITIZEN COMMENTS ON THE ELT PROJECT IN NEW ORLEANS

The reactions and assessments quoted in this section were obtained, as in the other sites, from questionnaires, letters, documents, transcripts of interviews, staff members' notes, and teacher and student reports. In New Orleans, in addition, during the 1968-69 season, we sponsored an essay contest, advertised in the schools and judged by local notables, which brought us several hundred student essays on the subject of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project.

In all of the sites, there were criticisms of the Project--sometimes vitriolic. But the New Orleans Project has the distinction of being the only one to receive real hate mail. Remarkably, some teachers in Orleans and Jefferson parishes discovered that the whole Project was a Communistic plot to subvert the morals and loyalties of the students. In this fairly short section we have reprinted a few such accusations just because we find them interesting, and because we think that such letters make it clear why Mr. Vaughan may have felt that a super-cautious approach to choosing and producing the Project plays was called for in the particular environment in which he was working.

Let us make it very clear, though, that the inclusion of even a few letters from the radical right gives a much distorted picture of New Orleans' response to the Project. The I-found-a-commie reactions were in a tiny minority, and the great bulk of reactions we collected were well-informed, favorable, and thoughtful. Will the reader please ignore the silly reactions as he tries to form, from the printed opinions, an estimate of the Project's reception in New Orleans?

The Comments

In my opinion, the play, Charley's Aunt, was a well acted play. The actors played their parts well and held the attention of the audience throughout the entire performance. However, they did have trouble controlling the laughter and applause of the audience at times. This, however, should be expected of a young adult audience not acquainted with the theatre.

(from a student's comments)

I do not think a sophisticated person would enjoy it [Charley's Aunt] as much as we did because it was rather simple.

(from a student's comments)

This viewer recommends it only for the very young at heart (and mind), and for those desperate for escape from reality (in the latter case, I'm sure day dreaming would suffice).

(from a teacher's comments)

All in all, the play was excellently staged; however, I feel that the way in which the various actors interpreted their roles was rather intense. Charley's role, for example, was that of a love-sick college student. I think he overemphasized this fact so that he appeared somewhat effeminate.

(from a student's comments)

The scenery was very attractive and effective in giving the viewer a much better understanding of the beautifully decorated apartments, buildings, and courtyards of England about 1895.

(from a student's comments)

This was the funniest play I have ever seen, and I recommend it to anyone.

(from a student's comments)

The changing of the scenery was also something interesting to see. At all the other plays, they would close the curtains and not see a thing. But I guess we were just lucky!!

(from a student's letter to the
Project Supervisor)

The discussion of the play in class added to my enjoyment. I enjoyed getting other people's reactions and finding out little things they noticed that I did not. Next time I shall be more observant.

(from a student's comments)

Before seeing this play I had little knowledge of the theater and thought that a play was the last thing I would want to see. Now I can hardly wait for the next one.

(from a student's comments)

Before Repertory I thought that Romeo and Juliet was just "hog wash," but I changed my mind quickly. The production made many individuals realize that situations such as Romeo and Juliet's still exist today.

(from a student's essay)

But this deeper understanding of the play did not end when I left the Civic Theatre. Instead, I discovered that I wanted to learn more about the play. I reread Romeo and Juliet and read commentaries on the play. I noticed that the more I studied the play, the more inner meaning I found.

(from a student's letter to the
Project Supervisor)

Seeing Romeo and Juliet performance the way Shakespeare meant it to be has brought the play to life for me.

(from a student's letter to the
Project Supervisor)

I was greatly moved by the play Romeo and Juliet. To me this was one of the greatest plays I've ever seen.

(from a student's comments)

Probably if Romeo and Juliet would have been in our type of language it probably would have been a duller play but we might have understood it.

(from a student's comments)

I will agree with those who were disappointed with the performance of Romeo and Juliet. But those who saw Charley's Aunt must admit that it was fantastically well-presented and extremely enjoyable. It stands to reason, though, that the easy-going comedy will win over an audience quicker than the tragedy.

(from a student's letter to a
local radio station)

As I said before, I really did enjoy Charley's Aunt and Romeo and Juliet, and I am going to start counting the days until the next productions begin.

(from a student's letter to a
local TV station)

Since reading and viewing Our Town I have begun to notice those "little things" which we usually never care about. This realization has brought me untold happiness with my family and friends.

(from a student's comments)

I enjoyed The Rivals enormously: more so than even the first play we saw which was Charley's Aunt.

(from a student's essay)

However, the play [The Rivals] was too deep for the average teenager to comprehend.

(from a student's essay)

Like many other people who were sitting around me were doing, I to went to sleep. I did watch the first act though and what I was able to understand, it seemed to be a fairly good play. [The Rivals]

(from a student's essay)

My favorite of the plays is The Rivals. It took a little attention to understand and if you missed part of it you were lost.

(from a student's essay)

The Crucible is one of the best plays yet you have ever produced.

(from a student's letter to the director)

Of my five trips, I think the Crucible is the best I have seen.

(from a student's letter to the director)

The Crucible was terrific! The actors did a very good job of throwing fits and other difficult actions.

(from a student's essay)

I enjoyed the play [The Crucible] itself, but I did not like some of the people who played in it. For one thing, John Proctor distracted me when he talked, I don't know if that is his natural voice or not, but it sounded fake.

(from a student's essay)

In reading the book, [Midsummer Night's Dream] I noticed that there were many scene changes. I often wondered just how the scenes would be changed on stage. When I went to see the play, I was amazed at how Mr. Vaughan carried the scene changes out.

(from a student's essay)

I felt that this play [A Midsummer Night's Dream] was the best I have seen so far. I enjoyed it much more than I did the Crucible.

(from a student's essay)

I understood the part [in Midsummer Night's Dream] we didn't read as well as the part we did read. I don't think I would have understood any of it as well as I did if we hadn't studied it.

(from a student's essay)

I must admit, while reading the play, [A Midsummer Night's Dream] I hated it. It seemed to have no depth and was boring. But once it started, I really liked it.

(from a student's essay)

I really enjoyed this play [A Midsummer Night's Dream] and I got more out of it by reading the play first.

(from a student's essay)

When we read the book, St. Joan, in class everyone thoroughly enjoyed it, but when it was acted out it wasn't as good.

(from a student's letter to the
Project Supervisor)

I deeply regret that I must for the first time criticize one of your plays, St. Joan. This play did not seem real and the parts were truly underacted. The opening scenes were truly phony.

(from a student's letter to the
Project Supervisor)

The scenery [in Tartuffe] was fabulous! I think it was best next to A Midsummer Night's Dream.

(from a student's essay)

Some of us got the impression that all the boys were "watching the football team and only laughing when they laughed." At any rate their general attitude seemed unusually unsophisticated compared with the usual run of the schools. As if they thought they would be thought "un-virile" to laugh at a play [Tartuffe] with wigs, lace, ruffles, etc. Many of the cast appear to have cordially disliked playing to this audience, which is a rare occurence this season. For the record, this was an all male audience. (mixed are far more natural in their reaction). Whites were downstairs, Negroes were upstairs.

(from an actor's report)

This play [Tartuffe] was the best one ever presented by the Repertory Theatre.

(from a student's essay)

Again an example of all boy and all girl schools (in this case the boys were upstairs and the girls downstairs) coming to the same performance and providing a less than ideal atmosphere. The same whistling and showing off from the boys, restlessness, etc. And the girls, who appeared to want to listen, [to Tartuffe] eventually seemed subdued.

(from an actor's report)

This was a very interested, enthusiastic audience from the very beginning of the play, [Tartuffe]. They were more enthusiastic and less inhibited than some student audiences, and compared well with the most enthusiastic audiences.

(from a staff member's notes)

The audience [at Tartuffe] seemed rather subdued from the start. Towards the end of the first act a small object landed on the stage (it turned out to have been a small, soft, green lozenge). One of the actors notified the stage manager, who in the intermission notified the principals, who then spoke in stern tones to the students.

The play then proceeded, the audience by now being thoroughly cowed and it wasn't until the last section of the play that they came to life a bit. In the opinion of this writer, it was wrong of the actor to have drawn the attention of the stage manager to the incident--it was after all trivial. It is perhaps understandable that the stage manager should worry about the safety of the company, but the blowing up of such a trivial incident rather alienated the audience (and perhaps put us on teacher's side--"tell-tale", etc.) But the fact that the audience were not as free in their reaction (from the beginning) or as spontaneous, as the average one, would indicate that this school may have a rather repressive disciplinary atmosphere--which would in turn explain the bravado of throwing one small piece of candy.

(from an actor's report)

Although enthusiastic and intelligent, there were times when they seemed shocked and puzzled (which they have every right to be) it seemed that the perhaps pippant way the character of Tartuffe was treated came as a surprise to them. This was an extreme example of the reaction of most Catholic Schools. Moliere must be amused!

(from an actor's report)

I enjoyed this play very much. I liked the beautiful costumes, and the scenery. This play [Tartuffe] always had you interested.

(from a student's essay)

The two performances [of Arms and the Man] I have seen to date were attended by very well behaved, attentive and interested young people. The excellent acting (in some cases rather "emphatic") completely won over the young people.

(from a teacher's report)

I think the play [Arms and the Man] is funny and the acting superb. The sets are just beautiful.

(from Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson's comments)

The students, as far as this observer could be certain, were refused permission to go to the toilet [during Arms and the Man]. One student gave some ugly backtalk to the teacher after she had refused to allow him to leave.

(from a staff member's notes)

The real strength of Arms and the Man must be credited to the genius of Shaw. Stuart Vaughn and the Repertory actors only brought this genius to life with their production, but this alone is enough. The Rep. deserves kudos for a first-rate performance.

(from a student newspaper review)

A 15-year-old sophomore said he had read the satire, but found the stage production [of Arms and the Man] "much better than reading it. It was better than I thought it would be. I hope to see more this season."

(from a student as quoted in
Times- Picayune)

This is a heavily integrated school, over 50 per cent of the students are Negro. The negro and white students do not sit together, the sexes are also segregated. The members of the audience were well-behaved and seemed to greatly enjoy the play. [Arms and the Man]

(from a staff member's notes)

On Friday morning I saw the Repertory Company's production of Arms and the Man and this was a clear illustration of the positive effects of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. It is not my role to pass judgment on the artistic quality of the performance, but I do feel I should express an opinion about the response of the particular audience I observed and on the appropriateness of the production as the first play of the third season.

The students from the schools at the performance that day loved the show. They were highly attentive and obviously enjoyed the Shavian thrusts at Romanticism and war as well as the melodramatic and farcial elements of the play. Only once did a few individuals break the mood of the play with some smart aleck sound effects when two young lovers in the play kissed. Otherwise the audience was with the performers all the way.

(from a staff member's notes)

Students, as usual, were impressed by the scenery and costumes. Most of the students were disappointed by the over-all production. They had been so enthusiastic about the last play and this one [Twelfth Night] was a definite let down in their estimation! Some of the seniors when questioned voted this the least successful of all the plays for the three years.

(from a teacher's report)

It was a pleasure to attend this performance [Twelfth Night]. Except for a slight restlessness which developed about an hour after the play had begun, the audience was attentive; and, more important, seemed delighted with the comic scenes. The cast seemed to sense their enthusiasm and gave a good performance, seeming to sense and to enjoy the reaction of the students. Malvolio was a cause of a great deal of mirth, and the audience burst into applause when Viola led Sebastian upstairs.

(from a staff member's notes)

In spite of a few muffs here and there and a rather slow start, New Orleans Repertory Theatre presented a very enjoyable production of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, a very enjoyable play.

(from a student newspaper review)

The audience was very much like the other audiences of Twelfth Night, the kids became bored, (not noisy or talkative) and one could sense their lack of interest (especially by the low sound of feet shuffling that came from the balcony.) After having seen this play five times in its entirety as well as three-fourths of a sixth performance, I feel that Twelfth Night had least appeal of all the plays for the student audience.

(from a staff member's notes)

The acting [in Twelfth Night] can hardly be criticized; it was very good, though Richard Lupino showed a taste of Sergius here and there David Byrd, new to us this year, won our hearts as one of the funniest actors yet to be seen in Rep's plays.

(from a student newspaper review)

If I had to rate [Twelfth Night] A, B, C, D, I would have to give it a "B-."

(from a teacher's report)

Twelfth Night

Pro:

The set was attractive in every way "workable."
The costuming was beautiful.
The performance by "Feste" was outstanding.
The Play is better on stage than in book form--it "plays" better than it "reads."

Con:

Some of the performances were poor--particularly Sir Andrew, Olivia, and Caesaino/Viola and Sebastian.
Some of the diction was badly garbled.
The theater was uncomfortably warm.
The pace of the play was too slow.
The portrayal of the priest was offensive.

(from a teacher's report)

The students liked the lighting. One student said he had counted the number of 300 watt lamps in front of the stage and was amazed at the number.

(from a teacher's report)

NOTE: Several of the following reactions deal with a book, entitled Protest, that was distributed along with the study packets for An Enemy of the People. The book had been published especially for the ELT Project by Bantam Books, and it contained a new English translation of the Ibsen play, done by David Scanlan, who was also directing the production of the Play. The selections, in keeping with the interpretation Scanlan gave the play, all had to do with the theme, "Man Against Society." The selections in the volume were, for the most part, non-fiction. They ranged from the Sermon on the Mount through quotations from Jefferson and Martin Luther King to essays by Jerry Rubin and prominent Black militants. The book was sloppily edited (e.g., the former Black P Stone Rangers are referred to as the "Blackstone Raiders"), and most of the selections had only the most tenuous relationships to the play that was at the center of the volume. Still, the book was "relevant" in the way that term is being used today, and apparently, it has been successful outside of New Orleans, since Bantam still advertises and promotes the volume.

-eds.

In Protest, many different problems are presented. High school students are old enough to understand that both sides of each issue have been presented in the book. After absorbing the different viewpoints, the student should be better prepared to decide on which side of the road he will walk.

(from a student newspaper)

For several weeks now, Ibsen's An Enemy of the People has been shown to high school students -- public, parochial, and private -- in the New Orleans Area. The selection of the play itself was amazing since the theme is pessimistic, bitingly ironic, scornful of those in authority and bleakly depressing. (Not exactly the type script that would make a theatre-goer out of a non-discerning teenager.)

Before attending the production, our high school population was given FREE a book entitled Protest: Man Against Society. An Enemy of the People (new translation by David Scanlan commissioned by Repertory Theatre, New Orleans) is printed therein, but so are essays completely incendiary in nature, violently critical of our democratic institutions, and encouraging revolt in our youth. But it is all done with finesse. Thus, the opening selection is Matthew's gospel wherein Christ commissions his twelve to go out and preach. In crescendo fashion, the essays become anti-democratic-state, more violently critical of our American institutions, more flagrantly revolutionary, until the book concludes with recommendations for militant protest.

Who are some of the authors? Robert Williams -- now living in Communist China. An active participant in the communist revolutionary movement in China, Southeast Asia and the Loyalist Cause in Spain. In Man's Fate Malraux portrays a man who realizes he must murder in cold blood for the good of the revolutionary movement. In the book, the reader is urged to subvert, to spread the ideology that would undermine the American system and destroy her symbols -- from draft registration, the Flag, and even our currency! (page 159, line 7) Mario Savio -- the leader of The Free Speech Movement (filthy speech) and one of the prime movers of the riots at Berkely -- is also included, as is Jerry Rubin -- a well-known hippie or yippie, and a leader in the Chicago demonstrations and riots.

(from a parent as part of a petition
against Protest)

The furor over the book Protest is still high on the list of topics of discussion in E. L. T. circles although apparently the crisis is now over. The protest over Protest began in Jefferson Parish and never really spread much beyond its boundaries. The first complaints were apparently registered by phone calls directly to the school board members. It's not completely clear, but the initial objections seem to have been about including a piece by Martin Luther King.

Later a lot of the criticism was shifted to questioning the wisdom of including the essay by Jerry Rubin. The issue of whether the book should be withdrawn from the schools was formally raised (and then tabled for later discussion) at the next Board meeting.

When the English Supervisor in Jefferson Parish learned of the controversy she called a meeting of all English teachers during school time. The meeting came forth with a close to unanimous endorsement for the book and its value as a teaching aid. The principal, too, put his support behind the book and the teachers.

One administrator had a call from a woman who said, "No child of mine is going to that play by Martin Luther King." Another incident I learned of was that one Jefferson Parish parent wrote a note asking that his child be excused from class on the days the book Protest was discussed. The request was honored.

Shirley Trusty told me she received a total of only four anonymous phone calls from people who called her an anarchist, a radical, an atheist, etc. There were no nasty letters signed or unsigned. In the last few days she says she has begun to receive several letters of support. The teachers at ____________ high school told her the book gave them material for some of the best lessons they've taught in some time.

(from a staff member's notes)

A well-balanced attempt was made to lighten heavy scenes by whatever humor could be drawn from the lines. The cast was well-selected--did a very fine job with a play [An Enemy of the People] which in itself did not appeal to student interest. The fact that the Man was "booed" by a small segment of the audience indicates he had impressed them as the "bad guy."

(from a teacher's report)

All students seemed quite impressed by the scenery, and how rapidly it was changed from act to act. Many students indicated their preference of this play [An Enemy of the People] over Twelfth Night because of the language. They proclaimed that this language was more realistic. It was amazing to note how unsympathetic some students were toward the protagonist.

(from a teacher's report)

All considered scenery [for Enemy of the People] especially good. As for comments about actors--the students had high praise for Mr. Vaughan's performance.

(from a teacher's report)

The students were particularly negative in their attitudes and remarks concerning Stuart Vaughan as Dr. Stockmann. [in Enemy of the People] They felt that his interpretation was silly and effeminate and seemed to resent his suppression of the audience by staring when he apparently forgot his lines or when they detected some ridiculously unnatural or pompous pose or gesture. They generally observed that Mr. Vaughan should stick to directing.

(from a teacher's report)

Great reaction to scenery--[in An Enemy of the People] it was in beautiful taste and excellent for the play. The audience reacted to the actors by cheering the "good guys" and booing the "bad guys."

(from a teacher's report)

Vaughan was a part of the first curtain call. This is a departure for him. At the first performance [of Enemy of the People] he did not appear with the cast for the first curtain call, but rather appeared in the second one, alone on the stage. He "struck a pose" in his green robe-de-chambre holding a large piece of paper aloft!!

(from a staff member's notes)

But, on witnessing the performance of An Enemy of the People by the Repertory Theatre company, I must say that Rep had laid its biggest "bomb" ever.

(from a student's review in a student newspaper)

I think the play [Enemy of the People] was well cast and that the actors did an excellent job considering what the play was about and the way it was written. The scenery was extremely realistic. Petra should have had another dress.

(from a student's report)

You failed us! When we are having so many problems with integration you even went out of your way to hurt us with Protest. The last two one-act plays for immature students was indefensible. They need inspirational plays with universal and uplifting material.

...In recalling the twelve plays, I think that an effort was made to brainwash our youth with radical ideas. The Shakespearean ones were protest against parents. Charley's Aunt was against the mores of the day, The Crucible and Enemy of the People against government, Arms and the Man belittled patriotism.

I resent our tax money being used to destroy conservative American standards. And, horror of horrors, the grand climax was the futility and purposelessness of life in the outrageous last presentation of two plays. Oh yes, Tartuffe showed that the outwardly good man is rotten at the core. This pattern was obvious only lately to me.

(from an English teacher's comments)

I think that the study packets prepared for teachers are well done. However, too many teachers seem to feel that they must use all of the material, and too much time is spent teaching the plays. In addition, the let's-read-the-play-in-class activity crops up too often. I feel that a better understanding and appreciation of the theatre should be one of our objectives in high school English. However, it is only one of many.

(from a principal's comments)

At times the impression I received from Repertory productions was that high school students cannot appreciate the majority of theatre as the author intended it; therefore it is necessary to accentuate the comedy and base elements in the play to hold the audience's attention.

(from a student's essay)

The plays for the three years ought to have been chosen and announced. So, in this way, you can have the scope and plan and progressively more sophisticated plays except for the first "funny" thing each year to begin the season. That way, we would get a good representation of plays.

Should be tightly tied into the curriculum--an integral part. If it's a good play given a good performances, it will be accepted as such.

If we were to do it again, I would like to see total theatre--other art forms--theatre as drama, musicals, ballet, et cetera.

(from an interview with a school official)

In both balconies one could not hear the actors or actresses. Perhaps the best feature of the play was scenery.

Many students were disappointed in the play itself. The general feeling was that Ibsen's play was outdated and had little relation to today's protest movement.

(from a teacher's report)

On Friday morning I observed a performance of the touring show at __________ Academy. Its quality must be judged somewhat in terms of its purposes. The project supervisor wanted to give both teachers and students some idea of what to expect before attending the two Ionesco one-acts (she told me on Thursday that she felt perhaps the teachers needed the orientation even more than the students). The introduction was designed to be more than just another experience with absurd dialogue; it was to have a message. And it did! It wasn't a lecture, but aside from the fact that it contained dialogue, it wasn't really a play either. It was a message punctuated with gimmicky bits. The message had three main threads: Theatre of the Absurd focuses on failures in communication. Theatre of the Absurd breaks away from traditional patterns. Theatre of the Absurd is MODERN. One of the pretexts early in the script is that preparations are being made for a lecturer to address the students. He arrives and the two innocents who have been mopping and dusting the place ask him several leading questions "before" the students arrive. The dialogue sounded about as natural as a white tornado commercial, and even though the "lecturer" eventually disappears, the dialogue never fully breaks away from sounding contrived.

I don't wish to make it sound as if the show is a real disaster. It isn't. On the contrary, the actors do a spirited job, and their enthusiasm inspires the audience who have never seen anything like this before and welcome it with cheers, laughter, and delight. What's more, there are several nice bits within the skit (some not-so-good ones, too), some intriguing set pieces, and the pace is always brisk.

For my taste the whole thing is so didactic (there's even a section in there which tries to console the viewer: If Ionesco seems to take a gloomy view of life, don't worry; there are other authors who have hopeful outlooks). But I suspect the supervisor knows her audience better than I do. The show does pretty much what she wants it to, and I am not prepared to say that what she wanted was not necessary.

(from a staff member's notes)

At the press conference, the first question Stuart was asked by a bubbling, innocent young reporter was, "Don't you think it's kind of conceited to take a curtain call all by yourself?" [After Enemy of the People]

(from a staff member's notes)

I and most of my students--not to mention colleagues--thought that the production of "The Chairs" was the only really mature, professional performance of three years of Repertory Theatre. Similarly, we are in general agreement that the production of "The Bald Soprano" typified or epitomized this theatre's calibre: immature, unprofessional, and insincere. It was not Ionesco. It was a travesty. The amateur group which presented the little educational playlet was far superior to the theatre production. Like most of the productions over the past three years, "The Bald Soprano" was apparently geared to an immature, unintelligent audience who wanted merely to be amused with slap-stick--rather than to experience living theatre for the reasons that Mr. Vaughan mouths to his public.

(from a teacher's report)

Last week's presentation of two absurdist plays, "The Chairs" and "The Bald Soprano," by Repertory Theatre was, in my belief, just compensation for any past performances where they may have erred.

(from a student newspaper)

I enjoyed this morning's skit [presented as an introduction to Ionesco's plays] more than I did any of the performances of the Repertory Theatre.

(from a student's letter to the
skit director)

The first play was thoroughly discussed in the intermission. The performance of "The Chairs" was the best one I have seen at the theatre. The response of the students around me was enthusiastic and the play was discussed throughout the intermission.

(from a student's report)

I thought every actor played his part exceptionally well. The costumes were great and fit the characters well. The scenery was also true to life. On the whole the two [Ionesco] plays were great.

It was the general opinion of a senior class both plays were very good as the themes of both is of much interest to us now. The casting was good.

I enjoyed "Bald Soprano" because it's theme was timely. Like the rest of my class, I also enjoyed seeing a different type of theater--the theater of the absurd. We were impressed by the sets. In "The

Chairs" the entrance of the Orator down the steep stairs was highly effective. The dome effect of this set also helped make the stage more eery and unreal which made the play itself seem exaggerated.

(from a student's report)

The students were not instructed by English teachers on the Theatre of the Absurd, because the director felt that the plays should be experienced, not read. I don't agree with this policy completely. "The Chairs" is a play loaded with meaning and forceful dialogue which the students--and many of the faculty--missed entirely.

The response from the students after viewing the production was enthusiastic. They wanted to discuss the plays, and from the discussions they gleaned more from the plays than on first viewing them.

One thing most definitely came out of the productions: Ionesco made both teachers and students think!

(from a teacher's report)

Most students enjoyed these plays ["Chairs"; "Bald Soprano"] and left the theatre discussing them. I thought the actors were fine. "Chairs" was great, I was really interested in it, it kept my attention, and the actors and actresses fit their parts.

(from a student's report)

The different ways different people react to a performance is evident in "The Chairs." When the orator comes to deliver his message to humanity and loses his power of speech, some reacted with laughter, while others were feeling a tenseness of apprehension.

The "Bald Soprano" wasn't as good as I thought it would be.

(from a student's report)

I had the opportunity to talk with a Negro teacher, in an all black school. She said that militancy has not yet developed very strongly in her school or in most of New Orleans. She said that, at the beginning of the project, students in her classes asked why there were no black actors, but answered their own question by saying that these were white plays. The next question was why not some black plays?

She tried to remain neutral but suggested they write to Miss Trusty if they were interested. Apparently they did not, as I mentioned this to Shirley and she didn't mention any letters coming in. Stuart has gotten two letters this year from teachers complaining about the absence of black actors.

However, she was enthusiastic about the project and was very unhappy about the idea of its being dropped. She said that the teachers in her school made use of the plays and that she had gotten some very good results from theatre-related activities. She said the students were very happy about being given the books and some were keeping all of them as the start of a home library.

(from a staff member's notes)

We attended the performances the first and second years. The acting in Romeo and Juliet as well as most of the other productions was excellent and I do think that it is very educational. However, due to rather very suggestive interpretation of some of the love scenes, especially Amid Summer Night's Dream and Tartuff we didn't feel the plays were fit for teenagers. This past year I do not know because as a faculty we decided though for the most part it was educational, we could not risk exposing our students to the type of interpretation of certain sections of plays as Tartuff.

(from an English teacher's comments)

There is no way to adequately evaluate the usefulness of living theater made available to school children. For some of these youngsters--many of them--it was their first experience with any theater, amateur or professional. As a whole, the students responded, vocally and in deeper ways. How to actually evaluate the increased background and development of each individual student can not be done. I believe Rep was the single, unique experience that these students had during the three years of its existence.

(from an English teacher's comments)

I know many students have gone back to see the productions a second time on their own and have been stimulated to go see other productions. These same students had not evidenced this interest previous to the Project.

(from a social studies teacher's comments)

In teaching English these past years I've seen the students' interest increase dramatically for literature really comes alive directly before their eyes at the theatre. For most it has been an experience they would never have gained elsewhere.

(from an English teacher's comments)

I especially enjoyed these plays because it was my first experience with the live theater and from these plays I got a fuller understanding of what I once considered "just a boring play."

(from a mathematics teacher's comments)

...has helped close, to some degree, the cultural gap between our students and those of the majority group. It has given our students something real and meaningful.

(from an English teacher's comments)

I have used some of the techniques of improvisation, and more than 50% of the students participated and enjoyed the experience.

I hope the project will continue in New Orleans. A foundation has been laid, and I believe a very worthwhile structure can be achieved through the very able Repertory Group which we have here.

(from an English teacher's comments)

I believe that these productions are of great value to the high school students who study them and see them. The students, of course, will not fully appreciate this opportunity given to them until they are out of school for several years.

(from a social studies teacher's comments)

New Orleans supposedly is a cultural center of the United States. However, the vast majority of its citizens (I am a native) know little or nothing about the theatre, including myself. Your productions have given us a chance to overcome this handicap to some extent.

(from a mathematics teacher's comments)

We hope that it continues for many years to come and becomes a permanent part of our cultural environment. It has added something to New Orleans that was missing.

(from a librarian's comments)

Most of my students complain that reading and digesting the play beforehand makes the play itself "deadly dull." If the student must study the play why not have him study it after each performance (this also would cause more students to attend).

(from an English teacher's comments)

Tremendous contribution to a culturally retarded area like New Orleans. All they revere is their "dear Carnival season." However, if it is to merit sincere support of the entire school-community population, it MUST present a racially integrated cast with Negroes playing roles that do not speak prejudice.

(from an English teacher's comments)

Of course you can't please everyone, but "Chairs" was the worst experience (theatrical or otherwise) I've ever encountered and "The Bald Soprano" just a notch higher. All the others I've enjoyed quite a great deal. Even a lot.

(from a history teacher's comments)

Boys upstairs and Girls downstairs--which makes for "showing off" perhaps, so that reactions are inclined to be too prolonged. They want to show each other how sophisticated they are.

(from an actor's report)

The repertory has an excellent company of actors. I have enjoyed every one of their performances and hope they will be in New Orleans for a long time to come.

(from a teacher's comments)

... and I was surprised to see real actors get out on a stage and perform before so many people watching them without making mistakes and having the play so that the people can understand what's going on.

(from a student's essay)

I think that if no effort is made in a school to study the plays before attending them it would be better for all concerned that such schools not participate. It was obvious that many students sitting behind us at the last repertory play were not prepared for theatre of the absurd. This was most annoying to students and teachers.

(from a principal's comments)

I think the entire program was beautifully organized and was a genuinely enriching educational experience. The little inconveniences caused in scheduling were nothing compared to the richness of the benefits gained by both students and teachers.

Long live Stuart Vaughan and his whole team!

(from a principal's comments)

I never have liked to read books. When I heard the names of these plays, I thought it would be some kind of sophisticated person's story. I never have attempted reading one of the play books because I knew I would never finish it. When we discussed the plays in class, I didn't think I was going to like them. But when I saw them, I really liked them. The building, in some way puts you in the spirit of the play.

(from a student's essay)

To have the performances of the calibre that we have enjoyed has been inspiration to our students as well as to our faculty members.

I was personally overwhelmed with the imagination employed in all of the productions and the scenery and costumes were equally remarkable.

Please find some way to have it continue.

(from a music teacher's comments)

The students it should reach do not attend. Selection of plays in very poor taste, usually.

(from an English teacher's comments)

My school withdrew from the project for many reasons, probably the most important being that our students were always assigned to the worst seats in the theatre. At least half the students were unable to see at least half the stage, and almost all were unable to hear the dialogue. How could anyone benefit from this?

(from an English teacher's comments)

Does not justify making students lose a whole day of school 4 times a year.

(from a mathematics teacher's comments)

Repertory Theater is an experience which illustrates the concepts of drama far more effectively and enjoyably than would be done in the conventional classroom situation.

(from a student's essay)

But even with its shortcomings, Repertory Theatre has proved to be a helpful asset to high school students in the New Orleans area. From this program they obtained knowledge and understanding leading to a greater appreciation to the theatre and of literature itself.

(from a student's essay)

I interviewed Father _____ of _____ High School which dropped out of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project this year. He gave me a combination of reasons that influenced the faculty's decision to vote against continuing in the program. They did not like having to collect money for a program they thought was going to be free (this student assessment was the outgrowth of a misunderstanding concerning the purchase of paperbacks for St. Joan); however, the faculty voted with the knowledge that there would be no charges this year. They did not like having to wait an hour in the theatre because, they were told, the players weren't ready. They did not like returning to school at 5:00 when regular dismissal time was 3:30 (I didn't ascertain how often this happened). They weren't terribly happy with the play choices or with several of the performances. They didn't like sitting in the balcony. Several faculty members objected to the problems of getting the whole school into busses. Other non-English faculty members called for "equal time" for other educationally justifiable field trips. In short, the tailor who designed this school-theatre program just didn't come up with an outfit that ______ High School could wear comfortably. In commenting on what he would recommend be done differently were it to be started over again, Father _____ suggested that High School principals should be polled about their individual needs and desires before any final plans are drawn up. Much more of the initiative for the program should come from the schools.

(from a staff member's notes)

A school official made these comments:

1) The project had too much money behind it. It is totally unrealistic to expect anyone but the U.S. government to be able to provide that kind of money; therefore, year four was doomed from the start.

2) The impetus for a project must come from within or at least appear to come from within.

3) The theatre company must make a considerable effort to get a representative Board of Directors.

4) It is possible that a similar program to Educational Laboratory Theatre Project could have utilized college theatre instead of professional theatre at considerably less cost.

5) Some feasibility study of a community should be made before choosing a site.

(from a staff member's notes)

I feel that any school programs, especially federally funded programs, should never in any small way make patriotism, the government, or the flag seem to be unimportant or appear in a slightly ridiculous manner. I did feel that my students heard a few remarks that were Un-American, and a few are too many.

(from an English teacher's comments)

To me, Rep is the best thing since the Beatles.

(from a student's essay)

Without a doubt the idea of Rep theatre is a good one and should be continued. It is probably the only contact with live theatre most of my high school students will ever have for the rest of their lives. The theatre, this year, has caused much unrest in my school--primarily due to some of the selections and the readings which went along with them. An Enemy of the People and "The Bald Soprano" were ill advised and in poor taste--not as artistic works of drama. There seems to be a gross misunderstanding by "responsible" persons involved as to the real academic level of our students--not to mention the cultural aspect. Both are very low. The "message" in "An Enemy of the People" was on another planet as far as the students were concerned. They are simply not ready to digest some of these productions. They are barren, culturally. The "responsible" people must help the students crawl before they ask them to run. Why--of all possible subjects at this time, must they harp on that theme of "Protest" and "complete freedom" when at the same time one of our high schools is being shattered by the SD's with protests, strikes, demonstrations and impossible demands? Some of the readings in the "Protest" book were anti-everything and vulgar--"I'll kick you in the N--S!" This is reading for mature, informed, intelligent minds who know left from right when it gives off the nauseating odor. The worst part of the whole joke was that teachers had to issue the book to students which is an automatic stamp of approval in their innocent eyes. Who censors or reviews these plays? Who is responsible? On the day of the play the absence is large and the plays are usually misunderstood. Many students fall asleep and one teacher says he went to Hell and back. The plays should help build a cultural foundation with the students (and some teachers too). Keep too much sophistication and controversial matters out of the plays. Let the students grow, untouched, until they can understand, digest and smell a familiar odor!

(from a history teacher's comments)

One of the finest ways of exposing our young people to art, literature, and culture. Our students (boys) were overwhelmingly favorable to the program.

(from a guidance counselor's comments)

Now I even go to plays at Tulane University.

(from a student's essay)

There is something unique about being there in the theater, just a matter of yards from the players. There is a certain feeling that these real people emit--a feeling of identification that is missing when the actors are merely pictures upon a screen.

(from a student's essay)

It was obvious from my first interview on, that this project was having a tremendously positive influence on the kind of education students from that school were receiving.

(from a staff member's notes)

I had one teacher who said the students need to study. I said, "They are studying." ... They get to thinking about the idea that some things are more important than others. For example, a student coming back from The Crucible said: "You know, I don't know but maybe there's something in that play: to rather die and be right than be wrong."

(from an interview with a principal)

The Educational Laboratory Theatre in my estimation is at least an attempt at raising the cultural and intellectual level of the students and adults in the New Orleans area; for the most part, ELT succeeded.

(from a business teacher's comments)

I think it is both entertaining and educational. A very worthwhile experience for students and teachers.

(from a history teacher's comments)

Going to the Repatory Theatre it don't give us no kind of education. Knowing about William Shakepear or G. B. Shaw isn't teaching how to pick a preposition or adjective or adverbs. I just don't like it.

(from a student's essay)

However, I find three things basically wrong with the Repertory Theatre. First, the selection of plays is poor. Except for Shakespeare, I found the other three productions to be of little value to the students. Second, the actors are of less than second-rate stature. I have seen better acting at the theatre at L.S.U.N.O. Third, the direction of the plays leaves quite a lot to be desired. In other words, try and find someone beside Stuart Vaughan and his wife.

(from a physical education teacher's comments)

It also helped me understand parts of literature and to help me enjoy reading some of the most boring books ever written.

(from a student's essay)

It seems to me that the real question was whether or not the money could have been spent in another way to achieve greater results. I just do not have any fixed ideas about that question. I enjoyed the productions enormously as did the students from culturally rich homes. A few students seem to have decided on careers in the theatre primarily as a result of the Laboratory Theatre experiences. As with other areas of experimentation in education, lasting results take a much more prolonged period of work than most people are willing to accept. Results will be slow whether people like the idea or not.

(from a history teacher's comments)

There is nothing wrong with the theatre itself, but I do believe a better selection of plays could be made if the purpose of developing a love for theatre among teenagers is to be achieved. Some of the plays were just too far beyond their new developing taste for theatre--they get bored so quickly with a great deal of dialogue.

(from a school librarian's comments)

Last year we had to read the book before we saw the play. I feel this really ruins the play. When you read Shakespeare, you really get hung up. We were also tested on the plays. No one likes to sit and watch a play when they have to figure out the plot, setting, types of characters, etc.

(from a student's essay)

I also noticed that some of the actors put a hammy sound or expression while saying their line. Stewart Vaughan is one of the best actors for the theatre even though he is a hammy actor.

(from a student's essay)

If Repertory remains an educational project, the students should be allowed to make suggestions as to the plays they see. The plays do not have to be all modern plays, but they should be relevant to the life of the student. By this I do not mean that they should necessarily be related to "problems" of today. In some instances the plays should be given merely to entertain. The fact that the plays were presented as "educational" cut off some interest from the very beginning.

Another suggestion might be that particular performances be for Sophomores only, for Juniors only, for Seniors only. There is a vast gap between Sophomores and Seniors-- mentally, emotionally and approach to maturity. To the Sophomores, many or most of whom have not witnessed live theatre before, going to Rep is an exciting experience. They enjoy everything because it is all so new, whereas Seniors, whose excitement has diminished, are looking at the play itself--the acting, the production, the story--looking at it in depth, expecting something from it.

(from a principal's comments)

They either stay home or skip out. It is disgusting to hear that students do this but it is the truth. I will not lie to you. I use to stay home or skip out. But I sat down and thought about this very much. If the Federal Government can go to this much trouble to let us see these productions, I think students should have enough time to see them.

(from a student's essay)

The plays, next to the football games are the most exciting thing that happens at school in my own opinion.

(from a student's essay)

1. The Director is stale--He directs "safe" shows.
2. The entire production staff and shows are playing to a white public in an area (schools) 60% Negro.
3. Sick! Sick! Sick!

(from a speech teacher's comments)

A large number of students are absent on the days they are assigned to attend the repertory theatre.

I feel that the program has been a waste of time and money.

(from a science teacher's comments)

I think the Repatory Theator is a good way to pass time or to get of of school for a day. But I don't see how it will help my intellic any more. I don't even see how a William Sheakspear play can even give me culture. What will it be useful for but for a teacher to give you a test to see if you were paying attention or to go home and tell my parents "guess what I so a great writers play." I think or at least from all of my friend's point of view that this play stuff is a waste of money on who ever put's out the money.

(from a student's essay)

Such programs should begin in the early stages of education before habits are formed and before ideas are formulated. At this time the child is less likely to reject something that is new and different.

(from a guidance counselor's comments)

The study packets were valuable since overloaded teachers had no time to do research on plays they were sometimes unfamiliar with.

(from a principal's comments)

The Laboratory Theatre Project is one of the most thrilling and rewarding experiences that I have encountered in my life. Naturally the students have been overwhelmed over the plays we have seen thus far. In our classes we have correlated very conveniently what we have seen on stafe with our regular work in the classroom. Especially in the area of creative writing or written composition.

(from an English teacher's comments)

Before each performance, the student is subjected to a batter of discussions, panels, tests, and so forth. The student must, after reading the play, use his mind as a stage and envision the play, directing it to suit himself. He is held responsible for this "play," and many grades depend upon it. Woe is he who interprets his play differently than the teacher.

My point is this: I believe that *some* background work is necessary; but not enough to bore you and make you lose interest in the play.

(from a student's essay)

As a social studies teacher who is required to present a unit on Communism each year, I have felt, this year particularly, that some of the plays presented whether or not the choice was intentional, have served the Communist cause. The modern translation of *Enemy of the People* certainly communicated its message to young people and held their interest. For adults who "belong" to the establishment and realize its strengths as well as its weaknesses, the play presented no dangers but to disaffected youths it did. The pro-Communist message of *The Crucible*, on the other hand, misfired. Shaw, a master dramatist but nevertheless a radical and socialist, effectively "sold" his views to the students who didn't even realize that iconoclasm was his stock in trade. Certainly the themes of the plays were timely and if well-taught to intelligent students a challenge to thought rather than an incitement to rebellion.

(from a social studies teacher's comments)

A SAMPLING OF STUDENT, TEACHER, AND EDUCATOR COMMENTS ON THE ELT PROJECT IN LOS ANGELES

The ELT Project in Los Angeles was remarkable for the diversity and the emotionality of the reactions--both pro and con--that it provoked. Even aside from the lightning rod issues of racial integration and uneven artistic quality, the Project was, from the start, under attack from principals, who found the Project disruptive and annoying, and from drama teachers, who felt that the money going to the ELT might have benefitted both students and the theatre arts more had it been used for funding program proposals that had been submitted by drama teachers and their organizations.

Furthermore, the Project had gotten off to a bad start--financially, artistically, and politically--and the Inner City management's energies and resources for the next three years were diverted to repairing the damages done at the start by the company's original managers. The job of building educator support for the Project was rendered well nigh impossible by the fact that a new group of English teachers was involved in the Project each year, and teacher involvement, for reasons discussed elsewhere, was minimal, compared to what was the case in the other sites. So each year--or even each production--the job of selling the teachers had to begin all over.

The Project in Los Angeles, to put it briefly, had just about everything going against it. Still, it had its champions, and the collection of reactions printed below demonstrates that the value of the Project lay less in its objective accomplishments than in the eyes of the beholders.

The comments reprinted below are arranged in rough chronological order, and at times we have taken the editorial liberty of juxtaposing several wildly dissonant opinions about the same matter, simply to emphasize how diverse were the reactions the Project inspired. The proportion of positive, negative, and mixed reactions in the reprinted comments is about the same as in the whole population of reactions from which they were selected.

The comments were gathered from questionnaires; from reports written by teachers and students randomly selected from the crowd in the theatre lobby; from notes made by CEMREL staff members; from interviews with teachers, administrators, students and groups of students; from letters written to the ICCC and to Project officials and to newspapers; from stories and editorials in high school newspapers; and from various memoranda and official communications. In addition to quoted reactions, we have inserted, at the end of the section, a report of a series of interviews and observations carried out by Dr. Brian Hansen in three "representative" Los Angeles high schools.

Coming to this section after reading through the reactions to the Project in Rhode Island and New Orleans, the reader should be struck by the facts that, in Los Angeles alone, there was strong and sustained opposition to the Project, hostile criticism of the theatre company and its objectives and practices, and little evidence of progress toward consolidating the Project and integrating it into the educational program.

The weight of opinions in favor of and against the Project shifted, as the reader will see, according to the quality and suitability of each show that was presented. Since each teacher typically saw only a very few of the ICCC's plays, his opinions of the Project were likely to be based on the luck of the draw--on whether he saw a good show or a bummer--and on the second-hand testimony of students who had seen the plays. Administrators typically had seen no plays or had seen only one of the early and roundly condemned ones, and they tended to judge the Project by its effects upon their schedules. Students, who were most thoroughly familiar with the Project, were also by far the most favorable to it, but still more critical of all parts of it than were students in the other sites. But let the participants speak for themselves.

The Comments

"Tartuffe" was not so good as it could have been. There was too much slapstick.

(from a student's comments)

I liked Tartuffe. It showed how crumby people can get. It was realistic--more like people we know. And it was funny and interesting the way the family showed the father Tartuffe was cheating him.

(from a student's comments)

_______'s B-10's viewed the play with full enjoyment and almost equal understanding. Many were quoted as saying it was one of the funniest things they had ever seen.

(from a student newspaper)

As far as the B-10's themselves are concerned all of those questioned by this reporter felt that the parts that they would have seen, had they seen the original version, would not in any way been harmful to them.

(from a student newspaper)

During the past week my tenth grade students here at ______ High School have been involved in evaluating Tartuffe as a play and a performance. Their continual enthusiasm for both has been a source of discussions we have all enjoyed. They are eager to return to the theatre. I believe they will be even more receptive and enthusiastic as a result of their first successful journey into a realm of drama few have previously experienced.

(from an English teacher's letter to
Andre Gregory)

Where Moliere exposes false piety and sanctimonious pretenses, this presentation exploits stupidity, irrationality and vulgarity. Where

Moliere criticizes the self-conscious propriety of the rising French bourgeoisie, this version burlesques the manners and morals of what purports to be Monterey social elite. Moliere's intent of edifying his audience in the ways of 'rectitude' has been transformed into a rowdy, 'Bat-Man' type of circus from which no ethnic group emerges with dignity or honor.

(from an English teacher's comments)

This production does not educate the students about Moliere in general or Tartuffe in particular. Both have been distorted. This production also does not educate the average B10 student toward an understanding of good theater, in my estimation. It seems to teach distortion, bawdiness, burlesque, complete freedom, irresponsibility, and disrespect for many values held by the saner elements of our society....

I do not know what Mr. Gregory's purpose is, but I feel that he has no more right to crusade at the expense of the project, the students, the schools, and the taxpayers than has the teacher in the classroom a right to violate the course of study and the rules of decorum to teach what he thinks the "kids ought to know." The laboratory theater is not the adult stage; it is a gigantic classroom. It deserves better fare.

(from a teacher's letter to the project coordinator)

This memo will bring to your attention certain staff reactions to a preview performance of "Tartuffe" attended by District personnel, including Superintendents, Supervisors, Principals, English Teachers, and Drama Teachers of the Secondary Division, on Thursday, September 14, 1967.

To summarize, it is the almost unanimous conclusion of the staff members who attended that the play "Tartuffe" in its present version fails to meet many of the educational goals enumerated above. The specific reactions of certain staff members will be appended to this memo, but a general summary of the points on which they tend to agree follows:

1. The play has been changed from its historical setting of 17th Century France to 19th Century California. Thus, the characters in the play have been changed from French middle class citizens to characters that would be found in such a California setting, including Mexican and Negro citizens.

   This transposition of setting has made it most difficult for teachers of English and Drama to teach the play as representative of French 17th Century literature. The opportunity for the study of French 17th Century background material is lost, or at best, made irrelevant. It is also doubtful that a true parallel exists between interfamily relationships in 17th Century France, and these relationships in 19th Century California.

2. The theme of the play deals with hypocrisy in all forms of life, but specifically in religion, and in persons who represent religion. It was felt that in this particular production many persons of a particular religious persuasion may take exception to the frank, almost painful treatment accorded their belief.

3. The play, in its present form, features a prologue composed of slides depicting scenes which attempt to introduce to the viewer the theme of the play. The slides contain, among others, several scenes of nude painting and statuary which if they do not offend our students might cause reactions that are unpredictable. The slides also feature scenes of billboards advertising commercial institutions and products. Management of the companies whose advertising is displayed may object to having their products and good name featured in a setting which implies that their services are suspect and possibly hypocritical.

4. The play, in the opinion of many, overemphasizes the sexual aspect of the interrelationships among the characters. Specific reference is made here to physical aspects of sexual relationships depicted on the stage.

   The first act features a most intimate scene between Elmire and Tartuffe, during which the audience is led to believe that she responds emotionally and is sexually stimulated by Tartuffe - an interpretation that is not really to be found consistent with the character of Elmire as understood by many knowledgeable theater people.

5. The second act features a seduction scene which is not suitable for viewing by B10 students. The actors make indecent gestures, which while they are in character, are likely to be misunderstood by B10 students.

6. The play as presently produced tends to reinforce certain most unfortunate racial stereotypes. Mexican citizens are depicted as ignorant, foolish people. While Tartuffe, portrayed by Louis Gossett, an excellent Negro actor, is shown as a sly, wiley character who lends credence to the stereotype of the Negro as a seducer.

In its present form the play is so deficient in meeting the needs stated in the Grant application, and so objectionable for B10 viewing, that it has been decided to withhold attendance by B10 students from performances on Monday, September 18, and Tuesday, September 19.

Mr. Lunney and Mr. Gregory were advised of the objections to the present version of the play, as listed above. Mr. Gregory, the director of the play, agreed to modify the play extensively. Dr. Stern has witnessed the play for a second time on Friday night, September 15, 1967, during which he took extensive notes listing specific changes, which if effected, might make the play acceptable to the District for viewing by tenth grade pupils. He then met with Andre Gregory and Gregory Peck, informing them of the necessary revisions. On Tuesday, September 19, 1967, an invited audience of one administrator and a teacher from each of the participating schools will witness a performance of the revised version of the play and a decision will then be made as to whether there will be student participation in the project for the production "Tartuffe."

It should be understood that the concern of the school District is with the curriculum that in effect is a part of the classroom and is not concerned with the version of the play presented to adult audiences.

The archdiocese of the City of Los Angeles has felt the play is so objectionable, they have withdrawn their participation in the project.

(from a memorandum, the Superintendent
of Schools to members of the Los Angeles
School Board, September 18, 1967)

Although you do not need us for an apologist, we wish to praise your production of TARTUFFE. We found your conception brilliantly conceived and superbly executed.

We wish also to praise your behavior in front of us teachers when many spoke so blackly of the whole TARTUFFE business. Why there was so much talk about the 1842 California setting we cannot understand. It seems that the teachers never heard of the director's function as a creative person.

You are creative, and your play is a success. It is both moral and funny; and if Mr. Cecil Smith and English teachers cannot see this, perhaps both should be in different professions.

We await your next work eagerly.

(from a letter to Andre Gregory sent by
nine High School teachers)

The hard work you all have put into your first show gave me a really delightful evening in the theatre. The work was full of imagination, broke references, I felt like a kid at a circus (and that involvement is hard to come by) and laughed nearly as much as the small boy sitting next to me.

Thank you and Bravo.

(from an adult subscriber)

The generally high quality of your technique, and the vibrancy of your ideas will, if allowed free rein, without a doubt, give the Music Center people a run for their money, and be a shot in the arm to small theaters all around L.A., because now they've got something to emulate.

(from an adult play-goer's letter to Andre Gregory)

I wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed "Tartuffe." It was imaginative, inventive, and it took some theatrical courage to do.

(from an adult play-goer's letter to Andre Gregory)

I have just this minute returned from your marvellous production of Tartuffe....

Despite Cecil Smith, there are people in this city who appreciate quality, vitality, and good fun in a theatre.

(from an adult play goer's letter to Andre Gregory and ICCC)

The announced schedule changes mentioned in Thursday's TIMES article indicate that you do not intend to live up to the original offer made to season ticket buyers....The decision of the Los Angeles School Board to censor all plays, to cancel scheduled plays, to re-stage directorially, and to pass on the acceptability of playwrights, all indicate that the theatre you offer isn't worth my time or money.

I suspect the cancellation of Brecht was due to a paranoid fear of a communist's influencing a student body audience. For you to have accepted such dictatorial arbitration is an offense to both adult theatre-goers and parents of young adult students. That Moliere, Ionesco, and Brecht need tampering with in names of "pure", "inoffensive" plays constitutes a "sell-out" of the announced goals of the ICCC.

Sadly, this city lacks an "aboveground" or popular theatre that strives to appeal to mentalities other than the Board of Education or society page types. You appeared, in your original prospectus, to be filling that void. Instead, we appear to be stuck with another Civic Light Opera, fully funded and approved by paternal bureaucrats.

Enjoy your audience. Your concessions will not satisfy them. "The Tempest" will soon give way to "Hello, Dolly". "The Seagull", obviously too controversial, can certainly be replaced by something more modern and fun-filled, like "Naughty Marietta". For the adults, there is always "This Was Burlesque."

(from a subscriber's letter, cancelling his subscription for the season)

I was present Friday morning with the first student audience. In my opinion, they were bored for the most part but reacted to the slapstick portions of the play and, of course, to those parts of the play that the staff had objected to. Over 100 PTA ladies were present and, surprisingly, had no major objections! It makes me feel pretty "square."

The Archdiocese, as indicated in the report, will still not participate in the project at this time.

(from a letter of a school administrator to project coordinator in Washington)

Glass Menagerie was extremely well done, although I don't personally enjoy watching that type of play.

(from a student's comments)

I found myself bored and restless after just half an hour.

(from a student's comments)

It was valuable. I'll know never to go again.

(from a student's comments)

This has been a very important experience for me, because it is the first time I have seen a play; and I can say that when I saw it, my opinion of television series and movies has changed very much because now I prefer to see a play more than anything else.

(from a student's letter to the company)

I always thought of plays as being boring and stuffy but now I've experienced such an interesting play as this I want to continue seeing plays.

(from a student's comment)

[Glass Menagerie] reminded me a little of my home life; constantly being nagged.

(from a student's comment)

The play was a dragged out soap opera. This stage can only be appreciated by a weird person.

(from a student's comment)

Many [students] believe that they would have liked the play much better if they hadn't read and studied it before hand in class.

(from a student newspaper editorial)

Having the Negro play Jim, the Gentleman Caller, was fine, but did he have to kiss Laura?

(from an interview in a student paper)

The thing that hurt me most was what the person said about Jim, the Negro, kissing Laura, the White Girl. They were in a play...It's a shame if this was all they noticed.

(from a letter to the editor of the above student paper)

Yours for great interracial theatre in Los Angeles! But a Negro for the "Gentleman Caller" in "Menagerie"???

(from a letter from an adult subscriber)

The play was great, but the teachers didn't help with their Wyatt Earp tactics, up and down the aisle, looking, listening, provoking. Surely that was not a typical day in that respect. The teachers even started whomping on our kids who were being as attentive as possible, believe me.

(from a teacher's letter to ICCC)

One of several factors affecting audience reaction was faulty acoustics. A wooden floor magnified the actor's footsteps and when it came time to recite lines, only those seated in the front rows could easily follow the dialogue.

Another problem centered around students' indifference and lack of courtesy. Those with hearing difficulties were understandedly bored. Conversely, those in front rows resorted to making unnecessary, sometimes insulting comments or noises. Not only did such behavior appall chaperoning teachers, but during the final scenes, it became evident that the four actors weren't really trying to be convincing in their roles. Disgusted by dull audience responses, they merely recited lines, poorly fabricating emotional involvement.

(from a student newspaper)

The Sophomore class of ____________ enjoyed your play very much. We appreciated the exceptional talent displayed by the actors and actresses. After a discussion among the class we concluded that Jim would have been more convincing if he had been Caucasian. His appearance because of his make-up distracted the audience though we considered his performance to be excellent.

(from a letter from a class of students)

I liked the Sea Gull very much, but one of the things that fascinated me were the stage crew people. They were very fast on setting the stage, and they did it so fast and perfect.

(from a student's letter to ICCC)

The Sea Gull was good but not as good as one on the lighter side would be. No one was interested.

(from an interview with students)

I generally liked the play, but the pace was too slow in parts. I think 10th graders get bored--there's not enough action.

(from an interview with students)

Sea Gull was a terrible selection. It's pretty awful to submit high school pupils to it. After the Sea Gull none of them will want to come to any other plays there.

(from a teacher's comment)

I don't think we should have read the book first. It wrecked it for me. I knew what was going to happen.

(from an interview with students)

I wouldn't have understood the play if I had not read the play beforehand.

(from an interview with students)

I wish it was a nicer theatre. When we go to a dirty, tumble-down theatre, we think we're going to see a dirty, tumble-down play.

(from an interview with students)

I have always considered The Sea Gull a rather drab, flaccid bird, tolerable only in a classic seashore environment, ridiculous in any other and absolutely enigmatic on the I.C.R. stage. What in the hell do you think you are doing to those young minds? I can hear them slamming shut on the theater, maybe forever, after each performance. If you want to give them a Bird, give them MacBird. At least that's theater.

(from an adult play-goer's letter to ICCC)

Midsummer Night's Dream was good. It was excellent. The music was majestic. I don't think the play would have been as good without it. We want more Shakespeare.

(from an interview with students)

I couldn't understand most of them. They ran all their words together. But it was funny to watch.

(from an interview with students)

I feel we liked this play better. It's springtime and we just had a Shakespeare Festival. The Sea Gull and Glass Menagerie were tragedies and we were ready for something light.

(from an interview with students)

I especially enjoyed Midsummer Night's Dream because of the costumes. Those designed for the royalty in the court were exquisite and beautiful.

(from a student's comments)

The psychedelic music was conducive to fantasy.

(from a student's comments)

I think it's a wonderful idea to give us the experience of seeing live productions to help us better appreciate drama, literature, and maybe even the English language.

(from a student's comments)

I wanted to tell you that me and my fellow school mates enjoy your show very much. I thought the actors were very good. I hope you will have more plays, so that we and other schools may enjoy them.

(from a student's letter to ICCC)

It's very rewarding to see this play; the characters I had thought to be frail and cold through simple reading, come alive with warmth and vitality. Although reading the play tells people exactly what's going to happen, it can't do all those special things an actor does to bring his character to life. I enjoyed the play very much because it taught me that a rich experience can be gained by watching "live" actors give life to otherwise dead characters.

(from a student's letter to an actor)

I especially enjoyed "A Midsummer Night's Dream" because of the costumes. Those designed for the royalty in the court were exquisite and extremely beautiful. Those selected for the small play Pyramus and Thisby were extremely effective as they looked like something a group of workers like that would turn out.

(from a student's letter to the costume designer)

The lighting gave the play a very good effect. I never once dreamed that anyone could make it look like there really were stars in the sky.

(from a student's letter to the company)

I think they should send actors to the schools to tell us about the play they're in. They know a lot more about it than our teachers.

(from an interview with a student)

With some of the plays we've seen, you remember back and are glad you got out of school. With Midsummer you remember back about the plays you enjoyed.

(from an interview with a student)

We should be allowed to sit where we want, with our friends, not herded in like animals.

(from an interview with a student)

I think it ruins plays to read them beforehand.

(from an interview with a student)

In my opinion, all the schools in Los Angeles should send their students to see this play. 'Cause that will increase their culture, and will give them the chance to have an experience as important as it is, to see a play for the first time.

(from a student's letter to the stage manager)

I thought it was going to be dull. But I enjoyed it very much, and that's the truth.

(from a student's letter to an actress)

In my opinion, the whole production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" was well presented, easy to understand, and very humorous. I felt it to be the best of the several plays presented by the Inner City Repertory Company. Unlike the more serious type of plays, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" held my attention throughout.

(from a student's report)

I've always thought of plays being boring and stuffy but now that I've experienced such an interesting play as this I want to continue seeing plays.

(from a student's letter to ICCC)

The directing of Midsummer Night's Dream was superb! There wasn't a dull moment in the whole play. The forest scene really got to me. It just had some kind of enchantment and charm about it. It was great.

(from a student's letter to ICCC)

The attention and enjoyment of this particular audience seemed to diminish slowly during the play, going from an atmosphere of expectancy and excitement before it started, through attention and amusement at the beginning, towards polite and rather fidgety restlessness by the end of the play. The reception at the end was friendly and enthusiastic, and the question and answer period afterwards, for which all the students and a majority of the players stayed, was interesting and intelligently handled on both sides of the footlights.

(from a visiting actor)

I think it would have been better if they'd given us plays with more action and saved Glass Menagerie and Sea Gull until the kids are more accustomed to seeing plays.

(from an interview with students)

I think having question and answer after each play is a waste of time. Not many ask questions. And the actors act hostile--if they feel that way they shouldn't come out. It just makes bad feelings.

(from an interview with a student)

I like the idea of having the integrated audience and cast. We don't have other races in our school.

(from a student's report)

I think we should read a summary before we see a play but not the whole play. You know every word they're going to say.

(from an interview with students)

I got so tired in both the Sea Gull and the Glass Menagerie; they were so boring. I liked Tartuffe. It was funny.

(from an interview with students)

We don't like the theatre. Things fell off the wall. A cover came off a light, and when a teacher tried to fix it, sparks shot out. It was funny. You can't hear in the back row. The floor is wooden, it should have a rug, because kids move their feet then you can't hear the play. The seats creak every time you move.

(from a student's report)

I liked Tartuffe best. It was really integrated. In Glass Menagerie they put that white stuff all over his face, but we all knew if it had really happened he'd have been a white guy.

(from an interview with a student)

If we want serious stuff we can stay home and listen to our parents. Why can't we have plays with action?

(from an interview with a student)

The audience was very bad, a fact which detracted from the performances. I felt that there were mixed feelings concerning the plays.

(from a student's report)

The plays gave me a broader view of literature and much enjoyment.

(from a student's report)

I think the project is a great experience for youngsters. They are very fortunate. I hope they pick plays with the pupils in mind next year, however. They won't help build a future theater audience if they keep on with things like Glass Menagerie and Sea Gull.

(from a teacher's comments)

The play was generally received favorably by the audience, a cross-section of racial back-grounds. Excellent characteration by the cast made this performance of A Raisin in the Sun a memorable experience.

(from a student newspaper)

Despite the fact that it was written ten years ago, [A Raisin in the Sun] has more significance now than it ever did before.

(from a student's comments)

Better acting would have had had a greater impact on the audience.

(from a student's comments)

I thought it was the best material ever done by the ICRC, but the acting was the worst.

(from a student's comments)

The play was excellently done. The cast portrayed their parts well and it wasn't long before the students began to feel the hopelessness and defeat of the family and to understand their feelings toward the white people. The performance was thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated by most of the audience.

(from a student newspaper)

Met with Jack Jackson at the ICCC. The present crises were:

1. Raisin in the Sun had opened to generally favorable reviews but the second play (Our Town) was doubtful of beginning rehearsals on time because
    a) the cast, while willing, could not sign contracts until
    b) the Equity Bond was established but
    c) the ICRC had not the money to put up the Equity Bond because
    d) The National Endowment for the Arts was holding up its first check because
    e) Representative Lipscomb (R., California) had been unsatisfied by the GAO audit of the ICRC books and
    f) had asked Roger Stevens to look into the matter, so
    g) Stevens had agreed to hold up all money pending on audit by National Endowment auditors, while
    h) HEW had taken the opportunity to examine the books at the same time, and
    i) both sets of auditors were expected that day.

2. Georg Stern of the Los Angeles Public Schools was asking for inclusion of a clause in the contract between the ICRC and the schools which would give the schools final approval of (a) choice of play, (b) choice of director, and (c) control over "artistic interpretation."

(from a staff member's notes)

The audience laughed, occasionally, and many were near tears at the end of the third act, but as a whole, the Inner City Repertory Company's presentation of "Our Town" was a sleepy bit of melodrama.

(from a student newspaper)

If anything saved Thorton Wilder's three act play it was a talented "multi-racial" cast. White, Black, Oriental, Mexican and Indian actors, cast as Wilder's universal family, gave the play a feeling of close-knit brotherhood and universality.

(from a student newspaper)

The cast did an excellent job of acting. It was an interracial cast, but the audience was not bothered by this, after the first couple minutes. It emphasized the universality of the play's philosophy.

(from a student newspaper)

Before we were permitted to leave the buses, various teachers had warned us that Cecil Smith would be in the audience. I hope he did not get the impression that all the people in the audience were making all that racket. There were some who did enjoy the play (personally, I thought the play rather boring) and share his feelings...One day we may learn to conduct ourselves properly at "cultural" happenings.

(from a student's letter to the L.A. Times.

I was unable to detect any particular reaction to [Our Town]. Certainly, enthusiasm was lacking.

(from our coordinator's report)

It was a generally very noisy, unruly audience. Most of the youngsters from __________High School, seemed to be creating disturbances. A security officer arrived to take charge of the youngsters who seemed to be under the influence of narcotics. By the time the security officer arrived approximately 11:15, the youngsters seemed to have sobered somewhat and were allowed to remain at the theatre.

(from the House Manager's report)

The students from __________ were so disorderly, loud, and discourteous that it was very difficult to enjoy the play.

(from a student's comments)

I asked many of my friends if they had enjoyed Our Town, and the majority of them said, yes. I couldn't help but think that you must have been very disgusted with the behavior of some students during the performance. I hope you will take into consideration that the students who did laugh, make noise, and throw things on stage were very immature and not ready for the use of privileges.

(from a student's letter to the ICCC)

Under the circumstances of yesterday's performance I believe you performed with great excellence. I'm only sorry that the audience's performance was not up to par.

(from a student's letter to the company)

The beginning of Our Town is deceptive: there is a fairly loud, but perfectly normal, precurtain buzz which you assume will die away as the house lights lower. The reverse happens: The lights lower and the theatre is swamped by cat calls, whistles, shouts, laughter, shushing, and an endless series of responses to each of the above. The noise does not cease with the first lines--indeed, the Stage Manager must feel an intruder into what is some other kind of occasion entirely. The Stage Manager bulls on, bellowing his lines with the clear implication that he doesn't care if anyone is listening, he has this job to do! For five minutes, or so, the two sides continue to ignore each other; the actors in their part of the room, the audience in theirs. Students continue to visit, to walk around the aisles, to play portable radios, and call into the relative dark. But eventually the actors win (after all, they are professionals, where as the students are only gifted amateurs) and the level of audience noise is reduced to a point at which the shouting Stage manager has a fair chance of being heard.

(from a staff member's notes)

At the performance of Our Town which I attended, the actor playing the Stage Manager read the entire part. When he was asked about this, he breezily replied that he had had to take on the part at the last moment. Yet he was listed in the printed program as an alternate for that part, a fact of which everyone in the auditorium, with the possible exception of himself, was aware. These students who are taken out of classes and brought down to Inner City deserve better than this. I am afraid that too many of them, instead of being encouraged to attend the theatre, are deciding that if this is theatre they will go to a ball game.

(from a teacher's comments)

I had never been to a play or seen any other than at school. I didn't know anything about plays until I went to the Cultural Center. I didn't really think I'd enjoy the plays, but I did. As I began to understand the plays, I enjoyed them more.

(from a student's letter to ICCC)

The high-track or Academically Enriched classes (at this ghetto school) were the only class which might be said to have a positive attitude toward the theatre-going experience: they really appeared to look forward to the experience and to have gotten something from it after.

(from a staff member's notes)

The student interviews brought out several interesting attitudes. One, the students are turned off by the theatre itself; two, the students think that the acting is not what it should be; and three, the students are annoyed by the behavior of students from other schools but are fighting to remain unprejudiced. Not only do they say they aren't but they will also say that the bad schools should be allowed to go to the theatre with them. On that other hand, they say that the other schools are noisy, disruptive, leer at the girls, smoke in the bathrooms and they're frightened.

(from a staff member's notes)

The students at the white upper-middle class schools said, and probably meant, that they soon forgot about the interracial casting at the Inner City. "Racial Pride" being what it is in the ghetto schools, however, no student there could say the same without arousing the deepest suspicions. Consider: the black students applaud the black actors but not the white on their entrance; they ask questions of black actors but not white; they shout out threats and warnings when the black Emily is about to marry a white George.

(from a staff member's notes)

Macbeth is god-awful. Not only is it a visual and auditory nightmare, but the scholarship is terrible. It is truly the worst of both school *and* theatre.

(from a staff member's notes)

After the excellent production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* last spring, *Macbeth* was a bitter disappointment.

(from a teacher's comments)

To my mind, what is lacking is enthusiasm, imagination and direction. This *Macbeth* has very little control and says nothing to the students. The least the director could have done was to have used a white Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and cast blacks in all the other roles. That would at least have given the play some modern-day significance, particularly for Inner City students, many of whom are black.... At the performance I attended there was often more theatre going on in the seats than on the stage.... The Educational Laboratory Theatre Project is an inspirational, imaginative, much needed, worthwhile program but *any* more productions like *Macbeth* will kill it with teachers and students alike.

(from a teacher's comments)

It may have reached those ignorant of the play, but it was a farce to those acquainted with it.

(from a teacher's comments)

Such poor casting, poor acting and poor directing can only lead to a rapid demise of the entire project.

(from a teacher's comments)

The teachers' reactions were unfavorable; they were indignant with the non-professional performance. They also felt concern for their and the students' loss of time from other subjects.

(from a staff member's notes)

I believe the play could have been half-way decent if we could have heard the actors.

(from a student's comments)

The play too often seemed ridiculous to the students. They laughed delightedly at the many incongruous situations--the buffoon King, the sword dropped by one of the lesser actors--the inadequacy of Lady MacBeth so obviously miscast.

(from a teacher's comment)

Coins were thrown on stage. Students applauded death scenes. Scenery and lighting were excellent.

(from a teacher's comment)

Shakespeare in all his wisdom could not have foreseeen that one of his lesser masterpieces would turn into a big bomb-shell and explode into a dud!!

(from a student's comment)

Students reacted very favorably to witches and violent scenes. Lady MacBeth was considered "unbelievable" as acted by Miss Richards. Acoustics were poor.

(from a teacher's comment)

Students seem to be disappointed with performance of certain actors. For example Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Still, I am pleased with their overall behaviour. I note maturity over last year.

(from a teacher's comment)

The production, although extremely weak in overall terms did provide a visual presentation of the text. The sets and the movement on the stage suggested, at least, the theatre during Shakespeare's day.

(from a teacher's comments)

Reactions to the scenery were highly agreeable. Most people like the authenticity of the house.

(from a teacher's comments)

What failed for myself as well as the students was the black Macbeth and Lady Macbeth who in nationality are Scottish. No matter how well they can act, the reality of the play is destroyed. For example--should you use an all white cast for "A Raisin in the Sun? If you wish to perform a Shakesperian play with black roles, try Othello.

(from a teacher's comments)

One thing I did like, was the creative use of different ethnic groups as actors and actresses. This was wonderful, for it depicted the true universal ideas behind Shakespeare by utilizing men from all races.

(from a student's comments)

Although one may learn from negative experiences and certainly it is possible to sharpen one's critical acumen on bad performances, the desire to attend live theatre, a goal this project aims to foster, is easily stifled by overexposure to this sort of thing.

(from a teacher's report)

Theatre experience of this kind [Macbeth] can only help to convince students that the schoolroom is not the worst place in the world to spend their day.

(from an English Department Chairman's comment)

The set-up is certainly not designed to foster interracial understanding. Students sit in blocks by race and black audiences react differently than white audiences. Our interviewer mentioned sitting in the midst of a black audience and being aware of their enjoyment. She said that although they were noisy, this was their way of expressing involvement. Whether the noise indicates approval or disapproval, whether it is a function of culture, class or intelligence, the fact remains that the white middle-class student doesn't understand or approve of this behavior. This experience does not give the students a chance to know each other individually and the superficial impression almost certainly serves to strengthen or create negative stereotypes of the Negro.

(from a staff member's notes)

The Fantasticks was a vast improvement over Macbeth--but Macbeth was so bad, anything would be. The company was delightful--youthful, vigorous, engaging--and a few even had style.

(from a teacher's comments)

This production totally amazed me. The summary of the season in pictures at the beginning of the show was very well done. It made one believe that perhaps the shows were not as bad as we thought they were, but we remembered they were that bad... By now, the audiences have become accustomed to integrated casts and I find it not only not objectionable, but refreshing that an actor might be cast on his merit and not his color... It was well-acted, beautifully sung, wonderfully danced and played.

(from a teacher's comments)

This play finally achieved some status in establishing a good reputation for the Inner City. Finally our students related...

(from a teacher's comments)

Your production inspired several of my speech squad to seek dramatic courses for next semester.

(from a teacher's comments)

All in all I am pleased to see some good work here. Your director is to be commended along with the fine cast. Perhaps the plays next year can be chosen with this year's comments in mind. Please no more Shakespeare or Chekhov--pick something good that your audience can relate to.

(from a teacher's comments)

As a student, I will say that this performance earned the most enthusiastic response of all of those which we have seen through this program. Usually there is mixed reaction to a performance at this theater, but so far, everyone to whom I have talked said that they enjoyed the performance of The Fantasticks very much.

(from a student's report)

The preview [slides of the Project] was rather propagandistic and boring. Much glorification of the ineffectual.

(from a teacher's comments)

Many of our students felt that rude, noisy conduct of others detracted from enjoyment of the play.

(from a teacher's comments)

Black high school audiences from our area seem to have a negative attitude toward any play or performance that does not involve them immediately. It is to the credit of the actors and director of Fantasticks to have captured and maintained the enthusiasm and attention of the audience. They are still talking about it. --Good work!

(from a teacher's comments)

Both students and teachers felt that Fantasticks was the best performance they had seen. The play communicated with the entire group. Apparently, this shows that students will cooperate if they are presented with a drama they are capable of identifying with.

(from a teacher's comments)

One part of the play that the students seemed to enjoy was the entrance of the actors by coming down the aisles and the actors exchanges with the audience during the performance.

(from a teacher's comments)

Fantasticks was unquestionably the best work that Inner City has done. The audience involvement was almost total, and the students were really delighted with the production and the performers.

(from a teacher's comments)

I liked it and I hope to see more in the coming year.

(from a student's comments)

This play should have been given some sort of trophy or at least an honorable mention for its fine display of talent and music.

(from a student's report)

I would enjoy viewing this play many more times and still have the same views and enthusiasm as now.

(from a student's report)

When the first song was sung many students laughed. I think it was because they weren't used to hearing people singing, and they didn't know how to watch it so they laughed. Later on when more songs were sung they listened with enjoyment.

(from a student's report)

The lighting during the sword fighting scene was really neat. During the intermission all I heard was how much everyone liked it.

(from a student's comments)

When this project was first proposed, I doubt that conscious thought was given to the intellectually deprived students in Los Angeles; yet in the four plays our students experienced, we have seen a growing consciousness of others, a much-improved feeling of empathy for others, and an interest in the outside world that resulted directly from the theatre experiences of our students.

(from a teacher's letter to Project officials)

I find those pupils who need the plays the most, like them the most.

(from teacher's letter to Project officials)

The majority of our students are interested and delighted by your productions. I hope you'll continue to do the excellent job you have been doing for their sakes.

(from teacher's letter to Project officials)

From [the students'] increased enthusiasm over the project, I would say the program is successful.

(from a teacher's letter to ICCC)

They have learned much about character motivation and interpretation and can discuss intelligently their differences of opinion regarding various performances. They are, therefore, learning a great deal about the subleties and variances in what makes up any one human being.

(from a teacher's letter to ICCC)

Last year, the junior class had the dubious pleasure of attending Inner City presentations of "A Raisin in the Sun," "Our Town," and "Macbeth." The general result was a decreased interest in dramatics of any sort.

(from a student newspaper editorial)

The Inner City Repertory Company has done it again. Last semester it was The Fantasticks; this semester they presented West Side Story with few flaws. These last two plays are proof of the wisdom of presenting comtemporary productions.

(from a student newspaper)

Quite often we are ready to criticize at the drop of a hat and perhaps hesitate to compliment something very well done. About 600 students from ______________ had the pleasure of seeing West Side Story.

Educational Laboratory Theatre group is to be commended for producing such a fine show. Some of the students comments went like this: "It was better than the movie", "It was such a moving experience", "I could really dig this performance".

The acting was outstanding. I especially enjoyed Anita and Riff. Quite a few of the teachers had an interesting discussion on Doc's comment, "How do we get through to them".

Wishing you the best of luck on future performances.

(from an English department chairman's letter to the director)

Staging of the play was good as far as direction, lighting, and sound go, but the choreography at its best was awful. Dancers were constantly out of step with each other or out of time with the music. The acting was credible, and parts were played with gusto. Direction of the production, handled by Lonny Chapman, was very good. Movements were smooth, and the actors were visible to all at all times. West Side Story was actually very well done, despite its few faults, and it was worth the day missed in school. The audience enjoyed itself hugely, even though it was not always receptive to the sentiment when supposed to be. But when the curtain calls came, the Inner City Repertory Company received its just reward in an enthusiastic ovation.

(from a student newspaper)

The choreography was done well and it was evident that the players had to put a lot of energy into the dance episodes. Also the use of the aisles, as usual, was quite good. The lighting was excellent; especially the spots which represented the police car lights.

As for the acting, it is my opinion that all the players did a fine job. I think that this was one of the better plays that the Inner City Company has put on. It was most entertaining. After Macbeth and Our Town, it was fresh and alive.

(from a student newspaper)

Except for the rather long prologue which was danced out by the two street gangs, The Jets and The Sharks, the play was done excellently.

(from a student newspaper)

The audience responded with a partial standing ovation. Girls next to us said it wasn't as good as their school performance although they admired the choreography.

The music was noticeably bad. On the other hand, the choreography was excellent. The sound level appears to be adequate generally.

(from a staff member's notes)

On Friday, the Inner City Repertory put on a fine performance of "West Side Story", although the audience was extremely rude. Many people were laughing, talking, and making loud noises. The players did a great job of acting despite these distractions.

(from a student newspaper)

I thought Room Service was very well done and that each actor fit his part very well. It was enjoyed by almost everyone and I think maybe the humor of the play was responsible for this. I do believe however, that this play was more entertaining than educational. But I really don't mind!

(from a student's report)

Most students apparently went to get out of class, but ended up enjoying the play. It was well done and the cast performed well. Intermissions went off smoothly, and the actors commented that the audience was excellent. I liked it.

(from a student's report)

The students reaction to Room Service was very positive. They were well behaved and spoke highly of the performance on returning buses and in school the following Monday.

(from a teacher's report)

The general comments I heard were that the play was one of the poorest we've seen in the series. I understood the actors kept to the original script - and that the play (I felt) itself was bad. Characters unrealistic and "fake." Audience during the performance talkative and over-reactive to occurences in Room Service. Just couldn't quiet down once the play started. Did enjoy the talking and questioning actors after the play was over.

(from a student's report)

Most of the students were very enthusiastic about Room Service, the actors, the set, the costuming and most of all the cohesive product. It was agreed that this was the "best play" viewed by the students as they emerged from the theatre. There was no need for supervision. We completely relaxed supervision, and enjoyed the play as audience members only.

(from a teacher's report)

Room Service was not an appropriate play. The majority of my students, both those who were primed and those not, thought the play ridiculous, and generally below their level.

(from a teacher's report)

The audience responded tolerantly to one substitute actor who carried the script with him on stage. I personally found the gratuitous profanity offensive, but I must admit that the audience as a whole seem to receive this production enthusiastically.

(from a teacher's report)

Room Service was very poorly chosen. Humor in America has vastly changed since 1937. The lines in the play may have been funny then but they aren't any more. Some of them were even gross. I couldn't relate to or involve myself with any of the characters. I realize that they were portraying characters of people but that is about as bad as watching a Burns and Allen re-run. Vaudeville is dead!

(from a student's report)

As a whole, the play was very good. Students seemed amused at the acting and reacted accordingly. Room Service was really funny and it truthfully carried out its main goal; to amuse the audience.

(from a student's report)

The students were extremely pleased with the performance [of Room Service] there was much laughter (at the right moments) and cheers and whistles. In fact, I've never seen students behave quite as enthusiastically. Unfortunately, my own reaction was that I have long outgrown farces of the 1930 vintage. I found the acting very difficult to swallow.

(from a teacher's comments)

We were relatively disappointed in the production in Room Service. The general atmosphere of attending the plays at ICCC is relaxed. By now we have gotten used to the theatre and have adopted certain modes of behavior while we're there. The real disappointment is found not in the actors, but rather in the selection. Although we should learn to appreciate farce, we nevertheless enjoyed West Side Story, Our Town and The Sea Gull, so much more.

(from a student's report)

The audience seemed to enjoy the play very much - fewer outbursts than usual.

(from a student's report)

Why does the Board of Education allow the "strange one" to sell Free Press to students each day, as the captive audience appears? I wish you could stop this; other teachers feel the same. It's disgusting!

(from a teacher's report)

Note: The "strange one" the teacher refers to was a lady of indeterminate age who did a land office business peddling the Los Angeles Free Press--a west coast version of the Village Voice, and about as "underground," really, as The Nation. Students bought the paper to read while waiting for the curtain to go up. A sizeable number of teachers suggested that their students should be prevented from buying a newspaper on a public street. This raises some interesting questions about what students are learning about their country in the schools.

Eds.

I was under the assumption that a major goal of this federally financed project was to motivate young people to become regular, refined theatre-goers or at least to evoke an appreciation of professional theatre. I, myself, have had a great deal of theatrical background, having attended many plays and concerts. I must, however, certainly say that if plays are presented in performances of such a low caliber as during these past three years, the government will be fortunate if the young people ever consider attending the theatre again. If I had had no previous knowledge of what good theatre is, I would indeed have no desire to view another play or musical ever again.

(from a teacher's report)

Personally I feel that the Theatre Project has many benefits for the students in the south central Los Angeles area, where I teach. First it is a first rate supplement to any literature and the post performance interaction with the actors is excellent. Second, few if any of these students have the interest or the opportunity to appreciate the legitimate theatre, and the Theatre Project has exposed them to this cultural opportunity.

(from an English department chairman's report)

The entire program was a frightful interruption of the regular school program.

(from a principal's comments)

The interruption to my classes is negligible.

(from a home-making teacher's report)

I think the idea of the project has been good and a great many students have benefitted from it. I think, however, that the interference with the school program cannot be continued.

(from a principal's comments)

The quality of the productions, especially set design and direction, was excellent. The acting, with a few notable exceptions, was entirely of professional quality. The theatre itself was crumby, dirty, esthetically disgusting--a thoroughly unpleasant place.

(from a history teacher's report)

I want projects like this to continue but I think Inner-City has gotten too wrapped up in the "black/white" things and has lost much of the potential this project can have and should have.

(from a music teacher's report)

I was aware of a change in the students who took part in the program. Their conduct was immeasurably better during their attendance. Their attitude changes were also apparent. They spoke of performances with greater anticipation and were envied by the others.

(from a home-making teacher's report)

My opinion is that the Theatre Project is a wonderful experience for the students to broaden their outlook and give them an opportunity to have this cultured advantage. The weakness is perhaps that the teachers do not prepare the students well enough.

(from a home-making teacher's report)

These plays are a perfect example of poor utilization of federal funds. Projects such as yours are of questionable educational value, and result in the public's criticism of the academic program.

(from a business teacher's report)

I feel the program has been mainly propaganda for racial integration, which I do not feel should be the purpose of this program.

(from an English teacher's report)

Because so many (500) were "allowed" to go and miss 4 or 5 other classes in other subject areas...unselected, unprepared, unmotivated and uncontrolled during the performance the results were disgusting, unpleasant,and not beneficial at all. Negro students from ____________ were especially not screened or selected, and kept up a continual barrage of cat-calls, audible remarks. Attending a cultural presentation such as Antigone should be restricted to only a select few students and not thrown open to the whim of a 16-yr-old student.

(from a mathematics teacher's report)

Some teachers feel very strongly that "black propaganda" should not be part of the contents.

(from a librarian's report)

I think the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project has made a profound impression on the kids. I think if you concentrated on the disadvantaged kids--they're the most enthusiastic kids in the world about it. The administrators don't get too enthusiastic because it's federally-funded, interracial and it interrupts. It is not yet seen as part of the curriculum.

I think the program has accelerated the acceptance of integrated education. But we should start earlier with this type of program. Make it the fourth or fifth grade through the 12th. We are fighting so many outside interests of the kids in high school--cars, work, parties, athletics.

(from a school official's comments)

Besides having an integrated cast, we also had an integrated audience; I should say "a segregated audience." All of the blacks sat on one side of the theatre while all of the whites sat on the other side. Many of the lines in the play Antigone could be easily related to the black power movement. The blacks related to these lines in a way which most people could not. There seemed to be a humorous competition between black and white, the competition being on the stage. You could hear shouts of "right on," from the black area in support of Susan Batson as she would yell at Adolph Caesar.

For me, as a white, there were two productions taking place, one of the stage and the other in the black audience. Many of the whites in my school felt insulted and degraded that they were forced to view the play with such a rude audience while others enjoyed the experience of the dual allegory. I felt that the experience outweighed the rudeness; the rudeness was part of the experience. Contact between blacks and whites should not be only on a stage, but you should be sure that this experience will be positive.

(from a student's comments)

The production of Antigone which I saw was adequate but uninspired. The acting was individually good (Ismene, The Nurse) to arresting (Antigone, Creon). But the direction was simply not apparent, with little sense of ensemble the result. But the audience! They stayed with the show very well; better than the show deserved, in fact. The audiences were quiet, attentive, and responsive. The single exception was their response to Haemon, who's hippy fright-wig hair-do is typical only of the musical Hair and of no other period in the history of man.

(from a staff member's notes)

Our school is in a low income area. Most of the students think that the theater is a local movie house showing the latest horror movie. This program is their only experience in seeing live plays. For this reason, I think that your program is a fantastic, educational, experience for our students.

(from a physic teacher's report)

I would say that Antigone was the worst possible choice; this version is too wordy, it was paced 1/2 hour too slow and the students were bored stiff after the 1st act.

(from a teacher's report)

For once, our students were well prepared. Most had studied the play in class.

Students' reactions ranged from "Terrible!" "I couldn't stand it" to "Great," "I really liked it." Many felt the last act dragged. The set was effective. All but a few felt that studying the play enhanced their enjoyment of the performance.

(from a teacher's report)

Even though most of the students had read Jean Anouilth's version of [Antigone], they still seemed to be extremely restless. I think this was due to the fact that the tragedy was extremely heavy, so to speak. The only other play which seemed to parallel this was the production of Macbeth.

(from a teacher's report)

Personally, the play [Antigone] wasn't a wise choice for a high school level audience. Both my own reaction and the reactions of the majority of my students were negative.

(from a teacher's report)

[Antigone] was particularly heavy, possibly too heavy for the students. Apparently some students thought they were watching television, coming in and out at 15 minute intervals. And some supervisors of theirs didn't mind, or notice. We had more trouble controlling our own students because these others were talking, laughing, walking around, etc.

(from a teacher's report)

I have seen a definite growth during the years of the project in both their awareness and positive attitude. Attendance at the plays has become a high point of their scholastic activities. Many of them have attended the plays a second time with outside friends.

(from a chemistry teacher's report)

Even though the performance of the audience was terrible, going was worthwhile. My suggestion is to present plays that are funny, violent and loud. That's the only thing high school audiences respond to.

(from a student's report)

The project strikes me as extremely valuable in implementing the theoretical appreciation most properly the roles of schools themselves. This is even truer for the less verbally-oriented students like those of our student body (Spanish culture background) who benefit by actual exposure to the cultural dramatic experience in this way.

(from a social studies teacher's report)

The acting was superb. This made the play, even though with a deep theme, a success. The actress who played Antigone and the actor who play Creon were superb.

(from a teacher's report)

When the audience first went in, some were excited, some weren't; but after the performance everyone seemed glad to leave and get away.

Costumes and scenery [in Antigone] were accepted well, but certain parts played by the actors and actresses were misunderstood.

(from a student's report)

One conservative teacher was disturbed by a comment by an actress at the end, which put the play [Antigone] in political, anti-Nixon terms. The actress wanted the play made relevant. The teacher saw the theater as a classroom.

(from a student's report)

The play presented, Antigone, was not very well played or directed. Projection and volume was weak enough that, coupled with the rowdy element in the audience, little could be heard from the center to the rear of the theatre. Has anything really positive developed from the program?

(from a teacher's report)

The students have enjoyed and benefited from the program. They are enthusiastic about it. This program has done magnificient things for the students. They are enthusiastic about drama: A minor miracle.

(from a teacher's report)

Students were eager to get out of school and see the play, probably in that order.

(from a teacher's report)

I was especially fortunate to have attended Midsummer Night's Dream, Fantastics, Room Service, and Antigone. Our students benefitted greatly from the experience; certainly, much greater an impact was made than would have been in a more sterile, classroom environment. The value of the project could be measured, too, in terms of growth of student enthusiasm over the four years of its existence. English classes were enriched and grew with the program. It would be a tragedy if the program cannot be continued. Indeed, I would hope that funds can be found for its expansion.

(from a home economics teacher's report)

I would have preferred the Sophocles version of the play. This, to me, was the worst of all ICCC performances. The guards, wearing German type helmets and marching noisily across the stage detracted from the mood of the play--comical rather than tragic. Also the ICCC has made it a point to present productions with integrated (racially) casts. They contend that there is no difference if the audience becomes involved in the plot. It seems that the company should have realized by now that the high school audience is either too hypocritical or too immature to accept it.

(from a student's report)

I am afraid that the actors were upset by the ill behavior of some of the students. From my seat in the audience I felt that the overwhelming majority of the students were interested and enjoyed the production. I wonder if the actors showing hurt or hate of those students who are disrespectful doesn't do more harm than good. It seems to make the good students feel rejected while having no effect at all upon the bad students.

(from a student's report)

Some of the audience wasn't mature enough to see human emotions played out in front of them. Consequently, there was distracting movement and lots of noise.

I would like to commend the cast for great patience and exceptional ability to maintain the dramatic mold in the face of such problems. I thought, as did my students, that they saw a fine play that was really well presented. This drama should enhance the reputation of the company greatly.

(from a teacher's report)

All in all, I thought the three year program was good: the exceptions all but ruined the thing, however, (Macbeth, Our Town) so students merely looked forward to a day off from school; although they never stopped hoping for a good one. Macbeth and Our Town were inexcusable flops! Glass Menagerie was ok, Westside good, Room Service, bad farce, Tartuffe neat! The best of everything was "Bald Soprano," which you brought to us. Excellent!

(from a teacher's report)

I caught a production of "The Bald Soprano" at __________ and was very much impressed. First by the production, and, second, by the audience. I personally am not wild about the director's interpretation, but the company is the best aggregate I have yet seen represent the ICCC (with exception of The Sea Gull, which doesn't really count). Strong, self-confident, clear, zestful are all adjectives which would apply. The audience was great (not only for a ghetto school but for any school). They were attentive and responsive. As one of the characters finished her absolutely pointless story, a mystified voice from the audience asked, "So what?" Right on! One of the senior English teachers flatly stated that three years ago a production of "The Bald Soprano" for these School seniors would have been an unparalled disaster. She couldn't help but show pride at the way her students had acted and gave full credit to the project.

(from a staff member's notes)

The multiracial casting of the play was great. I'm white and I don't give a damn about the color of other people. I think negro girls are just as beautiful as white girls, if not, better. I think more multiracial plays should be acted and shown to adults because the kids of today accept races better than adults. Adults are the ones which put down the black and red men of America. They are a bunch of hypocrites. And if they see how a bunch of kids of different races can act and put together a play without worrying about each others color some day they might see the light and come out of the hole. Maybe some day.

(from a student's comments)

Too many kids became uptight because of too many races involved and because of racial imbalance in the cast.

(from a student's comments)

As the reader has already discovered, the ICCC's practice of casting their plays interracially, without regard for "naturalistic" considerations, did influence the reactions of at least some respondents to the Project. Similarly, others were influenced by the practice of scheduling school visits to the theatre so that whenever possible the audience would be multiracial.

The racial aspects of the Los Angeles Project were prominent enough that we undertook a series of investigations (see the "Studies" volume of this report) of student responses to interracial casting. In addition, we added items to our questionnaires in Los Angeles which inquired about the effects that interracial casting had had upon the value of the Project and its quality. Such items appeared on the end-of-the-Project questionnaires given to English teachers, students, and administrators, on a questionnaire sent to a sample of teachers of subjects other than English, and on a questionnaire given to students in audiences which watched the ICCC touring company's production of "The Bald Soprano."

The comments reprinted below are from those three sources, and they are representative of the range of opinions to be found in the whole population of comments. What they do not make clear is that most of those invited to comment on the interracial aspects of the Project did not care to do so. It cannot be determined whether this lack of response means that, to this majority, the racial question was unimportant, that it was perceived as irrelevant, or that these people did not care to commit themselves. It will be seen that the responses which were made can be classified into four groups. There are those who accepted interracial casting and/or praised it as enlightening and educational. There are those who objected to it just because they disapproved of mixing the races. There are those who disapproved of it in specific cases, ostensibly because it was "unrealistic" or distorted the author's intention. And there are those who approved it in principle, but found that in practice interracial casting meant miscasting or casting which resulted in uneven or inappropriate performances.

In pondering the reactions of the Los Angeles participants to interracial casting, it should be remembered that, in Rhode Island, by the Project's third season, Adrian Hall's casting practices were often as "unrealistic," in terms of race, as Inner City's. In his Macbeth, for example, the First Murderer, the Nurse, and one of the lords was black; in Red Roses for Me, Inspector Finglas, the embodiment of British imperialism, was black, as were some of the residents of Dublin; in Woodrow Wilson, George Washington, of all people, was played by a black actor. But no one, to our *knowledge, at any time, commented either negatively or positively on Hall's use of black actors in obviously "white" parts.*

The difference between the two sites can only be speculated on. Perhaps Inner City made a tactical error by making such a big point of its interraciality. Or perhaps it did too much too soon. Perhaps Hall did the superior job of educating his audience in the willing suspension of disbelief. Perhaps what was important was that Hall avoided unconventional casting in shows in which interraciality would be obtrusive or distracting. Or perhaps the social and racial climate is so different between the two parts of the country that what is unnoticed in Rhode Island is controversial in Los Angeles. Or perhaps the crucial point is that Hall's shows were first rate, so that not even the most prejudiced person could find a way to blame the black actors for messing up a show. Each speculation undoubtedly has some element of truth in it, but the differences between the sites in their reactions to this particular convention is one of the more intriguing puzzles left by the Project.

At first many students were opposed to interracial casting, mostly because of parent disapproval, but as the plays progressed, it became more acceptable. I think it's best with all colors and nationalities. There's a better understanding and communication in the audience because of this. Everybody needs to be exposed to this, now.

(from a student's comments)

I think that a negroe should not play an English king or German king because an English king is not Negro. Just like if a white were to play a part in Raisin in the Sun, it wouldn't give you the right picture in your mind. I think the parts played by Negroes should be meant for a negro actor. People aren't ready to accept a Negro king in England. But I guess you have to start somewhere.

(from a student's comments)

I think most of the plays can be enjoyed by people universally, so, for me, the interracial casting was not deterrent. I thought it was a good thing to expose L. A. to.

(from a student's comments)

I feel that there should be interracial casting except if the play is dealing with racial problems, there should be distinction among the races in casting.

(from a student's comments)

Everyone accepts the characters. It makes no difference what color they are as long as the character is portrayed the right way.

(from a student's comments)

The casting is good because most of us are thoroughly aware of our interracial society.

(from a student's comments)

I felt that the leading actors in Macbeth and the feminine lead in Antigone had "extremely bad effects" because of playing their roles "black."

(from a principal's comments)

I believe that interracial casting is good. It has not detracted from my enjoyment of the plays. I cannot offer an opinion of anyone else because I have not heard an opinion voiced by anyone else. I think that in some instances the casting was bad, not racially but character wise. However, on the whole I think it was good.

(from a student's comments)

I think inter-racial casting was all right but in some cases it hindered the play because people were more concerned with whether or not the kiss was real when the black guy kissed the white girl. I have seen some people grow up tremendously over this three year span due to this theatre project. But some idiots never grow up.

(from a student's comments)

Most of the people frowned on the way it was integrated. They just didn't like to see a black, white, and yellow all mixed up into the same family.

(from a student's comments)

I think that if a person playing a part of a family is colored, the rest of the family should also be colored.

(from a student's comments)

I went to the ICRC to see Antigone and I feel the play was good except that Antigone, Ismene, and Haemon should have been of the same race it would have made the play much better. By doing this it would have been more interesting and the feeling for the play would have been better.

(from a student's comments)

I do not believe that not all casting was done without regard to race backgrounds. There seemed to always be a white lead and a black lead. This is rather forcing it on us. Sometimes the mixed casting is effective and sometimes it is destructive.

(from a student's comments)

If the parts are played well, I don't usually notice. I mean, I wouldn't mention the fact unless someone asked me for a physical description of the actor.

(from a student's comments)

I think that interracial casting is one big step made in progress toward overthrowing prejudice. Don't hold us back just because we're black!

(from a student's comments)

We had interracial casting in our school plays long before we saw it at the theatre.

(from a student's comments)

I'm not prejudiced, so I don't mind who acts what.

(from a student's comments)

We have interracial casting in our own school plays, so I don't mind.

(from a student's comments)

In many instances where the casting was "good" students didn't object to multiracial casting. They enjoyed West Side Story, Our Town and Fantasticks immensely, but did not like the casting of Lady Macbeth.

(from a teacher's comments)

I don't object to multiracial casting but I do object to having one sister oriental and another black. This can not be so in real life. It doesn't look good on stage.

(from a student's comments)

Although the motives for multiracial casting may have been honorable ones, the people in the plays should have been of the race the author intended or made up to give that appearance. I think it is better to be creative within the boundaries of a play than to change its character.

(from a student's comments)

I feel that interracial casts are good to some extent, but after a while I and others got a little sick of seeing nothing but that. I feel it would be better to concentrate more on your productions than on being known for the interacialism. Many times you could not be heard, even past the first few rows.

(from a student's comments)

In plays, if performers are black present them as black. Don't present a black man as a white man's brother or father or son. Show it like it is.

(from a student's comments)

It seems to me that when you cast a play interacially, you do this just to say you have. Take *Macbeth*, we were told that Lady Macbeth was going to be performed by Beah Richards, a very good black actress, and you expanded on this point. But the truth was that Beah Richards was terribly miscast as Lady Macbeth. *Multiracial casting is fine, but only when the audience can forget about it*.

(from a student's comments)

No, interracial casting doesn't affect me. It's just people acting. What would affect me is when you have a girl playing a boy's part or a boy playing a girl's part.

(from a student's comments)

If the play has to do with black people, use black people. If the play has to do with mixed people, use mixed people.

(from a student's comments)

I get enjoyment watching black and white actors acting together. It doesn't make any difference who plays what part. If it were all black or all white I don't think I would like it.

(from a student's comments)

The mixing of the races doesn't bother me, it pleases me. Keep it up!

(from a student's comments)

Last year in the production of one of our school plays there were objections to the mixed races, so the characters were changed. This year, everyone participates in whatever role they want.

(from a student's comments)

I feel that the multiracial casting provided an opportunity for more people to respond to identify with, and enjoy the characters of the plays.

(from a student's comments)

There should have been more preparation in the beginning for an interracial cast. Although it didn't bother me, it definitely shocked a lot of other students until they got used to it. It really seemed that there was a special effort to mix everyone up and there should have been more concentration on fitting actors to their parts. I'd also like to point out that its kind of strange that in *Raisin in the Sun*, the family was all black and in any other plays where the family would normally be of another race, (white, Puerto Rican, Oriental) they mixed it all up. Just as putting a white person in the black family in *Raisin*...would have ruined the idea, so it goes for the other plays.

(from a student's comments)

Artistically, your practice of interracial casting was only harmful and deterring. The point for racial equality was made early in the project. It seems as though this point was driven home too much. The students have indicated that rather than, as you have stated, casting the plays without reference to racial or ethnic background, it seems as though you have made it a specific point to cast, in romantic roles, negro men opposite oriental girls, white men opposite negro girls.

(from a principal's comments)

This subject of interracial theatre, I don't think much people paid any attention to.

(from a student's comments)

I'm prejudice against mixing white and negros.

(from a student's comments)

The selection of plays should teach many other moral values than racial tolerance, which is overstressed.

(from a teacher's comments)

I don't think integrating the plays made them any different except I didn't think it was such a good idea in *West Side Story*.

(from a student's comments)

I felt, the using of a multiracial cast made the plays message or conflict more universal in meaning and also contributed greatly to the realization that the problems of other races are very much like our own. As I am Indian, I would, of course, liked to have seen more Indian actors.

(from a student's comments)

The actors were good but I hate to see black kissing white, white kissing brown etc. People look very trashey when they do this. I say leave us along because you just cause more problems. You had too much open sex.

(from a student's comments)

I think that in certain plays they should have used the same ethnic group called for. Mixing these races showed that in acting there is no prejudice, but it's not true in real life. The effect on me was that of disliking the plays more.

(from a student's comments)

The multiracial casting seemed to have little effect--at least there seemed to be little discussion about it.

(from a principal's comments)

I think that the type of racial casting is the most beneficial type of casting of all. It gives people an even deeper appreciation for the many different races of the world and lets people know there is equal opportunity in this sort of drama.

(from a student's comments)

The first few minutes we needed to get used to the multiracial casting but later on in the play we just overlooked it completely. I think it was an excellent idea.

(from a student's comments)

I don't see why questions should be asked about "interracial" casting. When I first saw these plays I thought of it just as a play, with "people" acting. Not as different "groups" of people. On some occasions after each play there is a question-answer period. Well, as far as I remember, a boy asked why the cast was mixed with different races of people in "Our Town" and the answer was, "because Thornton Wilder's play is universal." Isn't everything supposed to be "universal"? Why did that boy even ask such a question? Perhaps it is because most of us are influenced by social prejudices. Any way, I think this "interracial casting" questionnaire is unnecessary.

(from a student's comments)

I feel the students benefited from the interracial part of the program, but I do think the casting should call for the race the writer originally wrote the play for.

(from a student's comments)

I felt that the casting had very bad effects. Do you think that we students are that inane? Casting a black man for a white man's part takes us for total idiots.

(from a student's comments)

First of all, I think that this interracial bit was a bit too forced upon us. It was catastrophic how the director made such a big thing over interracialism. People are people and will accept and intermingle with each other no matter what color they are. Personally, I think the experiment will have no effect on children for they will or will not intermingle no matter who tells them to.

(from a student's comments)

Teachers in my school tended to see in pupil's response that which they expected to see.

Let me use an image: For my pupils the project opened windows; for many teachers, it slammed doors.

(from a teacher's comments)

Seeing mixed marriage or something like that can bring on negative attitudes, but on stage color really don't matter.

(from a student's comments)

I enjoy the interracial casting. Society has stressed too long separation and prejudice, so by seeing a play of this type people will be able to see that regardless of color people can work and have fun together.

(from a student's comments)

You come to see a play and actors, not their race. A face color has nothing to do with an actor's skill.

(from a student's comments)

When I see a play with an interracial cast in it, it makes it even more enjoyable.

(from a student's comments)

If the purpose of the theater was to acquaint students with legitimate stage experiences that might be justified. However, the issues of racial problems has not solved anything. If a play is well done it wouldn't matter who did the acting--it was only when the acting was poor that a problem of casting occurred.

A program that causes total school disturbance for an entire day is just NOT worthwhile. We could accomplish more by having theater experiences in our neighboring college community.

(from a principal's comments)

I think an interracial cast is beautiful. It makes one feel like there is no prejudice in the world.

(from a student's comments)

In today's world you see quite a lot of interracial couples and groups. I've learned to accept it.

(from a student's comments)

I think not casting the play within certain races and ethnic groups was a very good idea. It showed students that they weren't prejudiced and that they shouldn't be either. It showed how close all the people from the Inner City Cultural Center were. It showed the students that we all could get along if we just tried. Thank you for the opportunity to say this to someone as I have wanted to for a long time.

(from a student's comments)

Using inter-racial casts is a good way to let some kids know, that already don't, that races can get together.

(from a student's comments)

I'm against interracial casting per se--just for the sake of interracial casting. I have not responded too well. When I go to the theatre I'd expect to see Othello black, Shylock Jewish, and Bernardo Puerto Rican--I think it ruined the effect of the plays with it so blatantly obvious. Why didn't you interracially cast A Raisin in the Sun?

(from a student's comments)

I never really noticed the multiracial casting. But on those that did notice, it has good effects.

(from a student's comments)

As far as the interracial casting, I disagree with it in certain cases. Certain plays are written to provide a social comment. If the races are interchanged, it sometimes subtracts from the value of the play. I think the idea of the plays are good, but they have been too poorly performed to be appreciated. If the casting and acting cannot be improved, the plays should be discontinued.

(from a student's comments)

I did not even realize any interracial casting was taking place until a friend called it to my attention. This type of casting had no effect on me because I see nothing wrong with it and am used to mixing with other races. Keep it up.

(from a student's comments)

I think I understand the motive for interracial casting in the various plays, and I agree with it. To comprehend that these problems or conflicts in the days are universal is fine, however, in certain plays, because of the subject matter, interracial casting just didn't fit. If the company was intent on making the plays interracial, they should have been consistent. One can see how the point of Raisin in the Sun would have been completely lost if people from other ethnic backgrounds had been used. So the cast was all Negro. Yet Our Town had direct references to other races in the play, and the cast was mixed.

(from a student's comments)

When I first saw a play with interracial casting, it was a shock, but I have come to dig it. Race is a big problem in the world now; but it doesn't really affect me. I love everyone.

(from a student's comments)

We have had interracial casting in our school plays since this school started. We enjoy working together.

(from a student's comments)

It didn't bother me that the races were mixed. I dig what you're doing.

(from a student's comments)

The most prevalent comment from this class regarding interracial casting was that if Our Town was cast interracially, Raisin in the Sun should be, too. I felt that students were more concerned with the quality of actors than with their racial background.

(from a teacher's comments)

I believe that most of the students accepted the actors regardless of race or ethnic groups. In my opinion it made no difference what color the actors were. The only effect the interracial casting had was to support the idea of accepting people as humans regardless of color.

(from a student's comments)

If a part is meant for a certain race, that part should be played by that race.

(from a student's comments)

I feel that multi-racial casting should be continued under all circumstances.

(from a student's comments)

Integrating of casts is OK if it don't make the play more unrealistic.

(from a student's comments)

I don't think interracial casting had anything to do with the enjoyment or what we got of a play, but it did help in the fight for racial tolerance.

(from a student's comments)

I don't think they should have a negro and a white kissing. I'm sure that there are two of the same race just as good.

(from a student's comments)

Certain people may have been offended by certain actors, but I think that the race thing was good. I think that it's time people looked at the world as it really is.

(from a student's comments)

THREE CASE STUDIES

Brian Hansen

During the 1968-69 academic year Dr. Brian Hansen and Miss Phyllis Hubbell conducted a series of case studies in three Los Angeles High Schools--one all-white and prosperous, one well-integrated and at a middling socioeconomic level, and one all-black and in the ghetto. The interviews and observations reported by Dr. Hansen on the following pages give a good idea of the impact of the ELT Project upon the schools toward the end of its second season.

Three schools were selected by CEMREL in conference with City School officials and the administration of the Inner City Repertory Company. The criteria generally were:

1. representative racial mix (all-white, all-black, mixed).
2. representative socio-economic levels (high, low, medium).

The schools finally selected for this study will be given fictitious names as follows:

The all-white, high SES school will be called LOS ALTOS;

The all-black, low SES school will be called HUGHES;

The racially mixed, middle SES school will be called CENTRAL.

The general design of the study was that two CEMREL observers would visit six B-11 English classes on the day preceding the school's attendance at Our Town, travel with the students to and from the theatre, experience the play with them, and visit the same classes on the day following the theatre attendance. Interviews with teachers, students, and administrators would be conducted during all three days; the Compatibility Index would be administered on the busses during the return bus trip from the theatre; the remainder of the tests would be given during class on the third and final day. In choosing which classes to visit, the major criterion was that, where they were identified, all ability levels should be represented.

Once the proposed study had received the approval of Dr. Stuart Stengel, Associate Superintendent, Division of Secondary Education, of the Los Angeles City Schools, the study met with the complete cooperation of all representatives of city school system. Even in those cases in which events forced such rapid changes of plans that a certain degree of irritation might have been the expected response, everyone from administrators to students was considerate, cooperative, and thoroughly helpful.

Observations

In planning visitations to the schools on the days immediately preceeding and following each school's visit to the theatre, the research team hoped to see B-11 English classrooms engaged in those activities normally associated with such an excursion. What we discovered was the broadest diversity imaginable in dealing with both the text of the play and the theatre-going experience. No compulsory curriculum is prescribed for teaching the Educational Laboratory Theatre plays and none of the English Departments included in the study had decided on a single classroom approach. As a result, each teacher made his or her own decision as to how the play would be taught--or if it would be taught at all. Most chose to deal in some way with the play, though the method of treatment had only two elements in common: (1) the paperwork surrounding the permission slips and (2) the resources provided by the curriculum packets.

For example, on the day preceeding the theatre experience each B-11 teacher makes note of the fact by making one final call for the trip permits, the permission slips which each student has to have signed by a parent before he may travel to the theatre. Were it not for this administrative detail, perhaps a quarter of the classes would have gone to the theatre with no mention of the impending theatre experience having been made.

The other unifying element in the B-11 English classrooms was the curriculum packets. However, the curriculum packets are prepared as collections of resource materials to be used by the teachers in any number of ways; classrooms are similar in their treatment of the plays only in so far as the teachers chose to use the same materials from the packets. The most popular items included in those packets were unquestionably the copies of the script. Many of the classes visited had read the play as preparation for seeing it. The teachers who had not required their students to read the play also gave no indication that they would be reading it after the performance; this fact is particularly interesting since Our Town is normally part of B-11 English curriculum, is included in the anthologies used throughout the system, and was the heavily favored choice of the B-11 teachers because of its relevance to the curriculum.

Those teachers who were making use of the script were doing so in a variety of ways. In some cases the students had read the play on their own as preparation for class discussion; in others the script was read aloud in class with students in the various roles. In one case the students were reading the script silently in class. One English teacher with a strong background in drama had assigned casts to student directors who blocked each act and presented it as a staged reading for the rest of the class. Using this method, he had staged both Our Town and The Skin of Our Teeth. Clearly the fact that Our Town appeared with other of Wilder's plays in the volume selected by the Educational Laboratory Theatre was an advantage exploited by some teachers: several of the classroom discussions were expanded by either the teacher or the students to include other plays by Wilder, notably The Skin of Our Teeth. One class was reading The Matchmaker aloud.

Before leaving the question of reading plays aloud in class, it would be well to note one of the major disadvantages of this very popular approach. Particularly in the case of low ability classes, the students may not have the reading skills required for oral reading of a play. In the case of the volume of plays under discussion,[1] the problem was aggravated by the typography. In the interest of swift silent reading, the editors have set the play's dialogue in quotation marks, making no other distinction between dialogue and stage directions. As a result the students were often confused as to what should or should not be read aloud. In some classes the experience of reading the plays aloud seemed to the observers to be an excruciating one, balancing boredom against frustration.

After the scripts, the items in the curriculum packets which received the most use were the discussion questions. Discussion was a very common mode of dealing with the plays: discussion of the play and what might be expected during the period before attending, discussion of the production on the day following. However, only a minority of the teachers using a discussion approach made use of the discussion questions provided in the curriculum packet; and most of these let the discussion move freely away from the questions in the packet. Only one stayed with the discussion questions, pursuing them with determination one after another.

The range of discussion topics gives some idea of the range of approaches taken by various English teachers. One teacher at Los Altos, whose class was in the midst of a sequence on the novel, led the class discussion to a consideration of Huckleberry Finn's experience with Nigger Jim on the raft. The students concluded that it was vital that a person appreciate the beauty of every minute of life; this occurred the day before the class attended Our Town and without the name of the play being mentioned once during the discussion. Another teacher at the same school began the period with a sense perception exercise and led the class into a discussion of the universality of feeling and experience. When the class had decided that most people experienced life in similar ways, and that Our Town is about the universal truth of ordinary life, the teacher explained that the production they would see the following day would have an integrated cast. The remainder of the period was spent discussing Grover's Corners as a miniature model of all human life, regardless of race.

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[1] Wilder, Thornton. Three Plays by Thornton Wilder, The Bantam Library of World Drama, 1966.

The teachers at Hughes appeared to be making more of an attempt to relate the discussion to the special circumstances of their students. One, for example, asked about the small-town's relationship between its citizens and their policeman, asking if the students saw a different attitude toward their own local police. The class thought there was. In the follow-up session this same teacher took Simon Stimson's bitter speech from Act III and asked the class to find in it a reason for his alcoholism. She then sought to explore this in terms of alcohol and drug addiction, a serious problem at Hughes.

Much of what we have here labled discussion is, in fact, closer to recitation. The exchange is not between the members of the class but between the teacher and the individual student; typically, the teacher asks a question which students attempt to answer until the teacher is satisfied. Less typically, the teacher states as fact some widely-held opinion about the play and the students are expected to provide examples supporting the truth of the statement. ("Who can tell me how Thornton Wilder shows that time is important in Our Town?") The temptation to change genuine class discussion into recitation--always an attractive temptation, because easier--is reinforced by the curriculum packets when they provide "Suggested Answers to Discussion Questions." These brief one-or-two-sentence answers, while perhaps valuable for the unprepared teacher, certainly do not do justice either to the play or the aesthetic experience of it.

The use of the other types of materials included in the curriculum packets were less in evidence. Two teachers made use of the vocabulary lists of unfamiliar terms and one built a discussion around the different styles of scenery illustrated by a set of plates included in the packet.

Very few visual materials from the curriculum packets were displayed in any of the rooms visited. An occasional room displayed the scene designs mentioned above; a few more rooms--at Hughes--were still displaying the major visual materials from Raisin in the Sun, a broadside of stills from the motion picture starring Sidney Poitier.

Before we leave the question of classroom treatment, mention should be made of the teacher at Hughes who prepared his class for Our Town by showing a film on the life and work of Robert Frost. The relationship of the film to Our Town was not pointed out to the students and remained a question in the mind of the observers. It may have been a subtle preparation for Our Town by way of introducing the students to rural New England. However, no connection with the play was developed in the class period preceeding the play, and the teacher was absent with the flu on the day following the performance. In all, the episode remains a minor mystery in the classroom treatment phase of the study.

On the basis of round trips between the schools and theatre with the students, both observers agreed that the bus trip was much less of a traumatic experience than the comments of some teachers had suggested. Certainly the students take the experience in stride.

Most Los Angeles students have spent a relatively large proportion of their lives in motor vehicles of one kind or another and the prospect of spending from fifteen to fifty minutes traveling the freeways in a school bus is hardly a special occasion for them. Indeed, from their actions and stated opinions it is clear that most look on the experience as a relaxing interlude in the school day. They sit quietly talking and--on the return trip--eating their lunches. The behavior of the students from all three schools, once they were on the busses, seemed to be exemplary.

However, the loading and unloading the busses was, for two schools at least, an emotionally trying experience for students and teachers alike. In the ways they carried out this relatively simple mechanical procedure the different life-styles of the various schools were clearly illustrated For example, at Los Altos the arrival of the busses was announced over the school intercom; without any significant commotion the B-11 students simply walked out of the school building, climbed on the busses and sat down. The only administrative detail was that each bus had posted in its window the names of the English classes, by teacher and class period, which should ride on that bus. The class divisions were not enforced and many students chose to sit with friends on other busses. Once they arrived at the theatre, the students were held on the busses for a few minutes by the Scheduling Coordinator until the house staff was ready to accomodate them. Then they simply walked at their own pace into the theatre; the entire class sat in one section, but apparently as a result of choice rather than requirement.

Hughes was largely the reverse of this in both attitude and procedure. The Hughes High School building is new and well kept up; it is also designed and operated rather like a prison. Without being obvious about it, the courtyard design of the building, coupled with discreet sections of chainlink fence, make it practically impregnable from both the inside and the outside. The main--and single--entrance is manned at all times by a plainclothes guard whose chief responsibility is to keep out anyone but bona fide students. Another security man, armed and in plain clothes, is available to assist teachers and administrators inside the school. Both these security men were assisting on the day the B-11 students went to the theatre.

Each student was assigned to a numbered bus. As he entered the bus, his name was checked off a list which determined that he was, in fact, a B-11 student and that his trip slip was in order; later the same list would be used to determine that each student got back on a bus for the trip back to school. In addition, the student-by-student loading of the busses allowed the teachers to check out students for signs of their being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. On this occasion several students were returned to classes, either because they were not

B-11 students (and hence were trying to cut class) or because their trip slips had not been returned. At least one boy was put in the custody of the security personnel for being clearly under the influence of something. The school's curriculum coordinator commented with a defeated shrug that while the school could keep intoxicated students from entering the bus, and prevent them from drinking or smoking anything enroute, there was really no way to deal with the determined drug-taker who drops pills during the excursion.

When they arrived at the theatre, the Hughes' students were under careful scrutiny as they moved en masse to the auditorium. During this transfer, as well as during each of the two intermissions, the adult supervisors made every effort to prevent students from slipping across the street to buy hot dogs, hamburgers, and soft drinks at a small snack counter. (A number succeeded. About the same number of the Los Altos students also visited the diner, but the Los Altos faculty apparently was not concerned about them.)

Central High handled the bus trip in a way which seemed to combine the rigorous planning of Hughes with the relaxed attitude of Los Altos. At Central and Los Altos the bussing is arranged by the English Department chairman. (At Hughes the task is largely the responsibility of the Curriculum Coordinator, a variety of administrative vice principal.) Central's English Chairman is a retired Army officer and he took seriously the logistics of theatre attendance.[2] The schedule for bus arrival, loading, and departure were carefully worked out to the minute, and the students received precise instructions concerning every phase of the trip, including the pace at which they should walk from the bus to the theatre ("quickly"). No veteran could miss the military attention to detail; any veteran would also recognize the easy relaxation on the part of busdrivers, teachers, and students which subverted the plan at every step. Ultimately, the bus trip from Central High to the Inner City Cultural Center and back was as relaxed as Los Altos'; the difference was that at Central some people stewed about it.

Audience behavior has been a constant concern of the Los Angeles project. Teachers, students, and actors have at one time or another all suggested that "inappropriate" audience behavior would damage the effectiveness the performances and ultimately of the whole Project. This issue deserves careful attention: we will return to it again and again.

Los Altos and Central attended with other schools and therefore cannot be held solely responsible for the behavior of the audiences in which they sat. It is fair to say, however, that both schools were typical high school audiences considering the grade level, the time-of-day, the program's non-selective nature, the quality of the production, and many other variables. The professional house management staff agreed with this assessment, giving the Central and Los Altos students slightly higher marks in this regard than did the CEMREL observers. (Teachers tend to think their own class behavior has been exemplary, but that other classes or schools have lowered the total "behavior score" of the audience.)

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[2] He estimated ten hours per play spent in arranging administrative details.

Certainly by experienced, adult theatre-going standards the student audiences are loud, squirmy, and occasionally disrespectful; but they are also highly responsive (particularly to broad comedy and melodramatic action), honest, and enormously energetic. One problem is that adults frequently misinterpret the meaning of overt responses manifested by student audiences. When the adult actors misread them, the results are often ironic. For example, many Los Altos students were highly critical of the Inner City Repertory Company's production of Our Town, yet the actors consider them well pleased; Hughes students enjoyed the play very much, but were considered by some actors to be rude and inattentive.

The truth is that well before Our Town, indeed even before the end of the first year, Hughes had developed a reputation as a loud and unruly audience; they did nothing during Our Town to substantially change that reputation.[3] The performance was several minutes old before the audience noise level had subsided to the point that the Stage Manager's voice could be heard at the rear of the auditorium. Shouted comments punctuated several bits of dramatic action; and, in the Third Act, the Stage Manager stopped the play to rebuke a boy in the front row, apparently for making remarks. Yet the applause at the final curtain was vigorous and sincere; conversations with students following the production convinced the CEMREL staff that the students did enjoy the performance, though many were unhappy with audience behavior. The faculty of Hughes thought this one of the better-behaved theatre excursions.

A point that should be touched upon here deals with the reaction of the black students of this low SES school toward the integrated acting company performing Our Town. Many of the students, particularly the males, showed considerable discomfort at the fact that in this production George was played by a white actor and Emily by a black actress. Especially during the wedding scene, and culminating in the kiss, many students from Hughes felt compelled to share with their neighbors their distaste at this interracial marriage. The actors report that some black audiences shouted out uncomplimentary comments during the wedding scene. The wide-spread assumption among actors and school officials is that this negative response to an interracial marriage is a public manifestation of the "Black Pride" which has in recent years made itself felt in Los Angeles' black schools. The actors report that the same reaction is rare from an all-white or racially integrated school.

These racial overtones were detectable at other points of the performance for Hughes. As the actors were introduced at the beginning of the play, none were applauded until the appearance of the first black actress; applause for actors continued, but the applause for black actors was louder by far than for white. One observer thought that the reason the audience talking stopped at all at the beginning of the first act was out of courtesy for a black actress. Similarly, at the curtain call, the vigorous applause for black actors was out of all proportion to either the excellence of their acting or the size of their role. During the question-and-answer period at the conclusion, nearly all questions were directed to black actors. At one point a girl directed a question to "the sister in purple" and the audience as a whole laughed with glee when a white actress--also dressed in purple--mistakenly began to answer.

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[3] Hughes had been scheduled to attend with an all-white, San Fernando Valley school, but at the last minute the other school cancelled. Theatre and scheduling staff had no doubt that the reason for the cancellation was reluctance to see the play in the company of Hughes.

The exchange between the students and actors during the question-and-answer period was illuminating. The process was that at the conclusion of the play the actors would bring chairs and sit in a row near the lip of the stage; the houselights would be brightened and the students invited to ask questions of the actors. The process appeared to work rather well, especially when the actor in the role of moderator repeated the nearly inaudible questions for the remainder of the audience.

The questions asked might be divided into two groups: those that the students really wanted to know and those that they thought they might be asked on tests. These last included "What is the theme of Our Town?" and "Why the integrated cast?" The first question, and ones like it, were generally thrown back to the student with a "Well, what do you think?" The questioner would usually view this response as an irrelevancy and evasive and the discussion would turn to something else. The actors developed a sure-fire response to the question of the integrated cast: "Because it's an integrated world." This answer never failed to bring applause. These perfunctory issues decided, the students turned to their real concerns.

The most consistent questions had to do with establishing that the actress playing Emily was, indeed, the same that plays the babysitter on the TV program Julia. If no other evidence were available, the demonstrated knowledge of and curiosity about this TV series would convince any observer of the relevance of Julia to the black teenager. The remainder of the questions were roughly divided between queries about private and professional lives of the actors ("Are you married?" "How old are you?" "How did you get started in acting?") and rather detailed questions about aspects of the production. In this last area, the students and teachers had some advantage on the actors. As previously mentioned, Our Town is a regular part of the 11th grade English curriculum; hence, all teachers and many students know the play very well. Sometimes they asked questions which the actors had great difficulty answering--or even understanding. For example, an accelerated English class from Los Altos had developed an extraordinarily elaborate theory concerning Wilder's treatment of the dead in Act Three.

Wilder, they thought, was suggesting that there was something beyond death and the graveyard; the dead are clearly waiting for something. Was it an orthodox Christian judgement or was it a Hindu karma? The class further excited by the performance, during which they noted that several of the chairs (symbolizing graves) in the graveyard were empty. A class member used the question-and-answer period to explain the theory to the actors and ask the significance of the empty chairs. The cast was confused. No, they had never considered Wilder's views on life after death; the chairs were empty because several minor actors were out of the company with the flu. The students could hardly conceal their contempt for the actors' poor scholarship when they discussed the issue the following day.

Classroom observations on the days following the theatre attendance must be viewed with some scepticism: the observers had been in the school for more than two days and their function was known to not only the teachers but to any student who cared to inquire. In addition, most teachers expected the observers and had invited them to administer the two short instruments given on that day. In many cases the administration of the tests prompted the students to ask what use would be made of the data and led to a discussion of CEMREL, the research component, and the entire project. In short, in every class visited, the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project and production of *Our Town* witnessed by the students was discussed at length. It appeared that all the teachers habitually spent the post-performance class in discussion, and that the students anticipated--in many cases eagerly--a chance to verbalize their feelings and perceptions about the play. In only one class did the teacher close off discussion so that the class could return to its original work (reading *The Matchmaker*); the rest of the teachers allowed the discussion of the play to use up whatever time remained at the conclusion of the testing sequence. Furthermore, while there were cases of classes which seemed apathetic both preceding and following their theatre attendance, the level of student involvement and general classroom involvement was higher following the theatre experience in nearly every case.

One interpretation of this would be that students and teachers alike find the performed play more attractive as a stimulus for discussion than the script. Perhaps significantly, the vigor of the discussion and skill with which students and teachers developed their thoughts concerning the production, had little to do with whether they liked or disliked either the production as a whole or some aspect of the production under discussion; in fact, particularly with students, dissatisfaction with some aspect of production often prompted the most vigorous, logical, and best-supported criticism.

The range of issues touched upon in classroom discussion following the performance was very wide; however, certain points recurred often enough to warrant reporting. In general, the issues separated clearly into two categories: discussion of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, including the audience behavior, and the immediate production of *Our Town*.

The premise stated or implied behind most of the class discussion was that the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project was a very good idea which was deficient in practice. In all three schools students wondered aloud why they had not been given some voice in play selection; this query came not only from those who had not agreed with the selections but from those who were generally satisfied with the choice of plays to that date. Part of the issue is clearly that the students would like a voice in such decisions, whether they use it or not.

In several cases, particularly in Los Altos, the students showed considerable interest in the testing instruments used by CEMREL and voiced curiosity about what the evaluation component was searching for and what it was finding. Several students voiced vigorous and carefully reasoned objections to the validity of behavioral research in the arts.

Again in Los Altos, students were often highly critical of the production standards of the Inner City Repertory Company; in fact, several students indicated that they had chosen not to attend because of the production they anticipated. For example, one girl said that Our Town was her favorite play and she did not wish to see the Inner City Repertory Company "ruin it"; she added that from all reports her fears had been realized. A student in another class said she found reading the play in class superior to seeing it. These represented a minority position, but by no means one that can be ignored.

One concern common to all three schools was that of audience behavior. Again and again classroom discussion returned to the issue of how much damage was done to the theatre experience by unruly audiences. Many of the Los Altos and Central students spoke with a mixture of astonishment and remorse about rowdy audience behavior at previous performances, though most rated the audience for Our Town as acceptable. The Hughes students, knowing their own reputation, considered the behavior of their own school as audience members to be less than perfect. In one high-ability English class the reaction of the class was close to outrage. A girl, making reference to the tradition that the school's cheerleaders attended in costume, thus providing easy school identification, said, "There were the cheerleaders wearing the blue and gold and I just about cried I was so embarrassed."

At least two classes at Hughes identified the individual whom the Stage Manager had rebuked for his behavior, and several openly suggested that he "and his kind" ought not to be allowed to attend. Another class thought the chief disrupters had been B-10's and B-12's who had no concern for the B-11 reputation.[4] This class, when asked by the teacher, suggested solutions to the problem: student monitors, stricter faculty supervision, and leaving the houselights up. All of these were unpopular with at least a majority of the class. One student suggested that audience behavior would improve for better plays ("...like Gone With the Wind").

Student opinion of Our Town touched nearly every facet of the production. Los Altos students were critical of many relatively fine points. For example, they were made uncomfortable by the intimacy of George and his sister Rebecca as they both crowded on the ladder representing George's room. Several students commented on the actors' shouting to project in the acoustically uneven Inner City Cultural Center.

In general, however, in all of the schools the discussion of the theatre experience was more a catalogue of what the individual student did or did not like about this particular production or an individual actor's portrayal. While the exchanges between those who liked an element and those who did not were often full of conviction--indeed of fervor--there was little attention ever paid to *why* the person felt as he did. Phrases such as "She was really neat," or "That was crummy," represented the normal level of discourse. Very seldom would a student attempt to explain with precision why he felt as he did.

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[4] Non-B-11 students do attend the plays when they are members of non-graded courses such as Speech, Drama, and Contemporary American Problems.

This more profound level of criticism was very much in evidence at Los Altos in a confrontation between several English classes and two cast members who visited the school immediately following the production. The discussion in this case was superior for two important reasons: the presence of the actors forced the students respond more thoughtfully, out of courtesy if nothing more; and the teachers, who had remained carefully neutral in the classroom setting, entered directly into the discussion. For nearly two hours the actor and actress answered questions and engaged successive English classes in discussion. When the experience was finished, the actor commented to one of the observers that he had so enjoyed the experience that he thought that school-visits should be a regular part of the project. A company member, he was surprised to learn that school-visits *were* part of the project.

The most popular topic of discussion, at least at Central and Los Altos, was that of the integrated casting of the play. While no one objected to integrated casting *per se*, or to the presence of black Americans in Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, a number of students said they found the mixture of races *within a single family* distracting and "unrealistic." The majority of students, however, appeared to understand and agree with the theatre's contention on this point: Grovers Corners is a micro-cosmic view of an integrated world. A significant number indicated boredom with the discussion, dismissing it with the observation that after the first few minutes of the performance they had ceased to notice the race of the actors at all. Oddly, considering the reactions in the theatre, the question of integrated casting was not mentioned during any classroom discussion at Hughes.

Interviews

The aim of the interviews conducted as part of the Modified Case Study was to elicit an expression of opinion about the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project from a range of participating groups within each of the target schools. These groups included administrators (represented here by principals, vice-principals, and counselors), English teachers, drama teachers, and students.

The questions asked in the interviews were suggested by the leadership of the Inner City Repertory Company, the administration of the Los Angeles City Schools, and CEMREL's research staff. In many cases the questions reflected issues which had been important in other sites of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. However, realizing that the Los Angeles project was in several ways unique among the three sites, the CEMREL staff made every effort to prepare a largely open-ended interview schedule for each group. In the actual interview, too, the respondents were encouraged to depart from the question at hand and to elaborate on side issues whenever it appeared such digressions might yield new information. All interviews were conducted by members of the CEMREL staff with the exception of the student interviews at Hughes High School where they were conducted by two experienced Negro teachers on loan from the Los Angeles City Schools.

The interviews filled nearly fifty hours of recording tape and represented responses from three principals, three vice-principals, six counselors, three drama teachers, fifteen English teachers, and more than fifty students. The number of student respondents is approximate since some interviews were conducted informally, on the bus or in the theatre, sometimes with several students at once.

Principal, Vice-Principal and Counselor Interviews

The most immediate point detectable in this group is that while Principals and Vice-Principals had firm opinions of the Project, most Councelors were uninformed of its goals, procedures, or outcomes. Information about the project had simply not found its way down to the counselor level and most of them could not offer anything more than opinions about what the Project might be attempting to bring about and what its potential could be.

The Principals and Vice-Principals of all three schools saw the major aim of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project to be one of cultural enrichment and each judged it accordingly. For example, the Principal of Los Altos thought that the Project was very good for the inner-city schools but that the students at his school had plenty of opportunity to participate in the cultural life of Los Angeles, and that it was therefore something of an educational redundancy to bus them to the theatre as part of the high school program. He expanded this argument to include the quality of the productions which he felt had not been sufficiently professional ("We have junior colleges that do better work") and he argued that it was doubly wrong to take school time for students to see productions which were inferior to those they normally saw with their parents. The principals of Central and Hughes subscribed to the same central thesis, but with different implications. Both argued that since the students at their schools did not come from homes with a theatregoing tradition, the effect of the program was to introduce them to a part of cultural life to which they would probably never be exposed. Of the group of administrators, only one (from Central) remarked that the program should be seen as a supplement to the regular English curriculum, specifically to units on dramatic literature.

As to the success of the program in achieving these goals, those administrators who had an opinion generally thought that they were being reached. Most thought that the response of the students with whom they had talked had been largely favorable to the program. ("More like it than don't.") The administrators from Hughes were more certain that the program had, indeed, touched their students. One counselor noted that the plays had been vigorously discussed in his guidance class; another said that he had found the plays motivated the students to read. Hughes' Principal detected in his students an increased willingness to "reflect on the social issues of the day" as a result of the program.

As to the greatest single benefit of the program, the Los Altos and Central administrators thought that simple "exposure" was benefit enough (Los Altos' principal could think of no prime benefit), but those at Hughes found other values. Specifically, they noted that for Hughes students to see actors "of their own ehtnic background in what were previously 'Anglo' roles" was a very valuable experience. And a counselor at the same school noted that the primarily visual and auditory experience of going to the theatre was a blessing to the poor reader, a major problem area at Hughes. The most common single flaw with the program, according to the administrators, fell in the category of "mechanics," or "administrative problems." The most common complaints were: (1) the disruption of school twice a semester, not only for the students attending the theatre but for nearly the entire student body; (2) the time and confusion involved in arranging for the busses, getting the correct number, securing parent permit slips, and checking the students on and off the busses; (3) having to arrange for substitute teachers to cover for the missing teachers on the day of the plays, and (4) play selection. In general, the principals tended to take the question of class disruption far more seriously than the teachers themselves, probably because they hear more complaints about such disruption than does any one teacher. The principal of Los Altos put the issue as forcefully as any when he said, "The teachers themselves, and I am talking about the entire staff, have become very disturbed that we are taking youngsters twice a semester out of not only English classes but out of classes in other areas." The problem of bussing, a low-level irritant at most schools, was an acute problem at Hughes. There the Curriculum Consultant, who is most closely associated with the problem, expanded on the transportation issue in general. For one thing, the inflexibility of the bus contract demands that the students be kept at the theatre for at least three hours, under threat of financial penalty to the school board. This means that in some cases the question-and-answer period had to be extended beyond its useful length and restless students kept in the theatre, a touchy problem in crowd control for the Hughes staff. Furthermore, while the Hughes students are well-behaved when in the presence of teachers who know them, the faculty must be on constant guard against the "outsider," either from another class or perhaps one not even in school, who joins in with the students in order to create a disturbance. Sometimes these individuals have found their own transportation to the theatre and simply joined the students as they moved from the bus to the auditorium.

According to the majority of administrators, especially those from Central, the problem of finding substitutes to cover classes was made very much easier by the provision of funds to pay them. In fact, as the Principal of Central pointed out, the high salary schedule for the substitutes provided in the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project budget made it easier to find substitutes from within the school than for any other project.

The principal of Los Altos, however, found a morale problem among his staff was created when teachers were paid for this project, but nor for others. All of the administrators who listed play selection procedures as a cause of complaint noted that, as the advice of the teachers was now being asked, the problem was becoming less serious.

In addition to these fairly common criticisms of the program, others were mentioned. For example, several administrators thought that the program should be organized so that all students had an equal opportunity to participate. Most hoped that it might become a permanent feature of the 10th grade English curriculum. (Several counselors expressed complete mystification as to why the program had focussed on the one class exclusively.) One Vice-Principal thought that the program was "pushing" racial integration "unreasobably," and a counselor at the same school thought that audience deportment problems were a result of having "unlike" schools attend together.

Most of the administrators felt strongly that, for all its faults, the program had improved the educational climate in their schools. The Principal of Los Altos allowed that, though it had not necessarily improved his program, it probably had done so for other schools in the system. No one thought that it had damaged their total program.

When asked if they saw any benefits to the total school program apart from English, the administrators divided neatly along socio-economic lines. Those from Los Altos could see none; those from Central and Hughes were quick to point out that any broadening experience was a benefit for all disciplines. As one counselor put it, "(The student) takes the same body to every class." Other administrators suggested that the experience had forced the students to consider social questions and had led them to outside reading. ("I've had students borrow books from me after these kinds of programs.")

Most of the administrators reported only very low levels of parent concern or interest in the second year of the project. During the first year there had been a flurry of parental contacts with the schools, during the Tartuffe controversy. The Los Altos principal reported that the parents of his students were chiefly concerned about the artistic quality of the play. Those from Central and Hughes questioned the moral and religious implications of the production. At the time of the interview, the principal of Central reported that most of the parents' comments were favorable. At Hughes, the major source of comment was from parents working as teachers' aids who had themselves seen the productions and were unanimously in favor of the project.

The same general division between Los Altos and the other two schools was detectable in the reported reaction of the faculty to the project. At Los Altos the English faculty was highly critical of the artistic level of the productions and the remainder of the staff was "very disturbed" at the demands made by the program. At Central and Hughes, the principals reported that the English faculty was largely satisfied with the productions and that the remainder of the faculty was "understanding." Apparently, the whole school will accept a program if the primary beneficiaries are happy with it.

None of the administrators minimized the disruption to the regular school day caused by the Educational Laboratory Theatre Program. Said one, "One day out of the week is just shot!" But most agreed, when asked, that the benefits of the program outweighed the liabilities. However, all were ready to suggest ways in which these liabilities could be reduced. Several thought that after-school, evening, and Saturday performances could be explored as a possible way of reducing the dislocation. One argued vigorously that a touring program that brought the actors and productions to the schools would be a more efficient solution. At the very least, pleaded the principal of Central, the program should schedule the larger schools to attend on a single day so that only one day of school was disrupted instead of two.

Less than a quarter of the administrators had seen any of the plays performed by the Inner City Cultural Center. (Half of these had seen Tartuffe, but only because the city schools had demanded that a representative from each school preview that controversial production). Those that had seen two or more productions were generally satisfied with the artistic level displayed by the company. The Curriculum Consultant from Hughes had seen every play and thought that the company was showing a steady increase in ability, especially in playing for high school audiences.

The counselors (the only ones asked this question) reported in the main that they could see no marked increase in elective English enrollment as a result of the program. One commented that some marginal English students, who, because of their poor records could have opted not to take English, had insisted in taking English classes because they wanted to go to the plays. Several stated their conviction that the play-going experience was particularly useful for the poor readers. All counselors who had been at that job long enough to notice changes reported that enrollment in Drama classes was on the increase, but none would give the credit to the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. The chief reason, they thought, was that the Los Angeles City Schools had recently revised the requirements for graduation in such a way as to make drama an acceptable English elective; furthermore, the system had just instituted an English "major" which allowed drama.

The administrators were asked, finally, what specific changes they would like to see made in the Theatre Project, and their suggestions may be summarized as follows:

1. Those in charge of the Project should be more responsive to the problems of administrators.

2. The possibility of evening and weekend performances should be explored, and ways should be found to avoid repeatedly disrupting the whole school to send one class to the theatre.

3. There should be a comprehensive plan developed which would provide for the growing maturity and sophistication of the students participating in the Theatre Project.

4. There should be provisions made for better enforcing acceptable behavior in the theatre.

5. The theatre itself should be made more attractive and comfortable.

6. Principals should have a greater voice in play selection.

7. There should be greater candor about what one principal referred to as "this racial issue." "Maybe," said the principal of Central, "we're getting a captive audience and subjecting them to something they wouldn't get by choosing....I'm not certain that the parents are aware of what their boys and girls are being subjected to." (His was not an isolated opinion.)

English and Drama Teachers

Two conclusions were inescapable during the teacher interviews: (1) as a group, the teachers were far more knowledgeable about the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project than were the administrators--and consequently had developed clearer and more forceful opinions; and (2) teachers' opinions of the entire project were closely related to the individual teacher's opinion of the artistic quality of the Inner City Repertory Company.

However, the respondent's conception of the aims of the program determined whether or not he saw the program as a success and, hence influenced his enthusiasm for it. And, as might be expected, there was something less than absolute unanimity among the teachers as to precisely what the Educational Laboratory Theatre was trying to accomplish.

In part, this confusion about objectives was more striking among the teachers because the group included two teachers, one from Los Altos and one from Central, who had been closely involved with the planning of the Los Angeles Project, who had attended CEMREL's planning conference in Providence during the summer of 1966, and who continued to serve on the advisory committee to the Los Angeles Project. Naturally, their knowledge of the conception and operation of the project was more thorough than that of the average teacher. Their insights and criticisms, therefore, were rather more detailed and their comments more substantial. It appears, also, that these two individuals were highly influential in molding opinions at their respective schools, and that between-school differences in attitude toward the program may in many cases be traced to the trend-setting opinions of influential individuals such as these.

As with the administrators, most of the teachers saw the primary goal of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project as some variation on the general aim of "cultural enrichment." Sometimes the goal was baldly stated ("To bring theatre to the underprivileged.") and sometimes it was implied ("To give the children a chance to see good theatre."), but the burden of the argument was usually the same: to some degree theatre was a civilizing influence to which more or less savage youngsters should be exposed. If an individual teacher thinks her students need to be influenced by exposure to the theatre he or she tends to find the program valuable; if not, he finds the program redundant. In general, the teachers from Hughes and Central fell into the first category, and those from Los Altos in the second. (Indeed, several Los Altos teachers seemed to echo the sentiments of the administrator who saw the Educational Laboratory Theatre as essentially an "inner city" program, in which Los Altos had been included because of vague ideas of "democracy.")

However, other teachers--both English and drama alike--saw a major goal of the program as the improvement of the English program, specifically in the area of dramatic literature. Roughly a third of all the teachers interviewed mentioned this as one of the major goals of the program, though very few saw it as the goal. Nearly all who mentioned this goal, thought that it was being achieved.

The third goal most often mentioned by teachers is that of "advancing racial integration." It is difficult to convey the centrality of this concern in the responses of the teachers. The aims of the Inner City Repertory Company were clear to all those who attended the plays and the "racial overtones" of the program were important to the very large majority of the respondents, whether or not they chose to relate them to the Project's goals. A member of the staff of Central put the matter clearly when he said he detected an unmistakable "schizonphrenia" in the program, "like Eve Black and Eve White, the gal with the split personality." Even though the program had originally been explained to him as "an attempt to raise the cultural background of all the kids," he thought that "the real goal of the entire program is to improve racial relations in our large cities." He had discovered, he said, that "the Federal Government is trying to see what it can do to speed up the cause of Civil Rights, not just with the Negro, but with the Mexican." It is important to note that this teacher agreed with these aims, and thought most other teachers did as well. But he was angry about the situation; he felt betrayed. "I feel used....We are mature enough that we could have been told the real reason!"

Several of the teachers who mentioned the racial overtones of the company and the program mentioned that they thought that changing racial attitudes had become one of the covert goals of the program. Another teacher from Central said that he thought a major aim of the program was the influencing of values, especially those concerning race. It was his contention that the program had been successful in this regard ("The kids are at least more thoughtful about those issues.") But, at least two teachers at Los Altos suggested that in some regards the program might be working to increase rather than decrease racial tensions. As one put it, "The behavior of the audiences from the underprivileged schools tends to reinforce any stereotypes [our students] have about how blacks behave." He went on to attribute some lack of student enthusiasm at Los Altos to their distaste for the prospect of seeing the plays in an audience made up in part of students from these "underprivileged" schools.

Other goals which some teachers thought were important to the Educational Laboratory Theatre Program included "training in theatre deportment," building audiences for the professional theatre, building the ability of the students to "empathize," and legitimatizing the value of the play modality in the adult world. This last goal was the carefully thought out personal goal of one teacher who had obviously found in the program an extention of her personal teaching goals. Briefly, these seemed to be that all experiences of literature are empathic acts, with dramatic literature making the most serious--and perhaps most useful--demands on the imagination of the reader. From this it followed for her that the theatre experience was far more than the illustration of a specific literary text; it was the expression of a particular style of life. And she was careful to note that her minority group students seemed especially quick to see the importance of "performing" in this larger sense, even when they remained unimpressed by literature as it is more usually understood. Needless to say, the interviewers were struck by the careful thought that many of the teachers had obviously given to the aims of the program.

Given the wide variety of goals which the teachers detected in or imposed upon the Educational Laboratory Theatre Program, it is a little surprising to discover that nearly all thought those goals were being achieved. Only two English teachers (both at Los Altos) flatly stated that, in terms of what they saw as its major goals, the Project was failing. The remainder of the respondents thought that the program was achieving its stated objectives, although some of them qualified their opinions. The general range of support for the program included on the one hand unrestrained approval ("Tremendous! Just tremendous!") to grudging admissions that it seemed to be succeeding "in spite of itself." If there was a modal position, it was that the teachers were strongly in favor of the program while aware that there was room for improvement.

When asked to name the single greatest benefit of the program, the majority of the teachers thought that it was the simple exposure of the students to the theatre. Some took the tack that exposure is rather like a birthright from which it was unfair to exclude anyone ("Bringing theatre to the masses, most of whom might never have experienced it throughout their entire lives."). Others enumerated the special qualities of going to the theatre which made it of educational advantage. These included: (1) forcing students to "stretch" for adult drama, (2) teaching them to discriminate and keep theatrical elements in mind, (3) extending their attention spans, and (4) removing the students completely from "their own community and their own methods of enjoyment." One teacher could think of no single benefit of the program ("I'm so disillusioned.").

It was when the teachers were asked to indicate the greatest single weakness of the program that the major difference between Los Altos' teachers and the others was manifested. Teachers from Hughes and Central found a variety of different flaws in the program, but teachers from Los Altos found only one of any importance: the quality of the productions mounted by the Inner City Repertory Company.

As one teacher at Los Altos put it, "I am put in the position of recommending all of these plays when honestly....I do not feel that they are valuable enough that a child should miss...four periods on that day." The acting came in for special criticism from one drama teacher who displayed some special knowledge: "I know some of these actors from UCLA, and they are not the best actors, and they are not interested in educational theatre, and they are not interested in students--and the students know it." The nearly universal feeling at Los Altos was that the level of direction and acting at the Inner City Repertory Company were "not strong enough to carry a professional production."

The teachers at Hughes and Central were not nearly as concerned about the quality of the productions as they were about other aspects of the program. (In fact one teacher at Hughes turned a liability into an asset when she noted that her students were excited "...to learn that [the ICRC is partly composed of] student actors getting training and experience out of which may come something worthwhile.") Play selection was the problem most frequently cited by teachers from Hughes and Central. "Mechanical problems" such as "herding the students around," bussing, substitutes, and too little "teacher involvement" were mentioned with about equal frequency.

Almost without exception, the teachers thought that the program had improved their effectiveness as classroom teachers. Two thought that it had not affected their teaching one way or another. One English chairman went out of his way to emphasize the effect of the program on the quality of English teaching: "It has done a world of good for the teachers." Some teachers pointed out the peripheral values of the program from the teachers' point of view. For example, one English teacher pointed out that the trip to the theatre was one of the few opportunities she had to deal with the students as a peer: "One of the most valuable parts of the program...is that I've actually been on a school bus with the kids....That's a learning experience."

With the sole exception of a teacher who refused on principle to use anyone else's work, the teachers were very pleased with the study packets they had received on each of the plays in the program. In some cases the praise approached the extravagant, especially since the study packets had begun to provide "tracked" discussion questions for various ability levels. The most serious criticisms of the study packets as a whole were that they were not aimed at the particular production of the play which was to be seen by the students. The most popular portions of the packets for the teachers were the "Suggested approaches to study" and the "Discussion Questions." The least frequently used were the "Vocabulary Lists" and the bibliographies.

Of the teachers interviewed nearly all had attended one or more of the teacher in-service workshops provided as part of the preparation for each play. Only a few had attended each workshop and fewer said they continued to attend on a regular basis. The general opinion of the in-service programs was that while they were generally very good--the one at which Cecil Smith of the Los Angeles Times had spoken was highly praised--they were not consistently good enough to warrant the trouble of attending. As one teacher put it, "a great inconvenience for an insulting $4.38!" The teachers from Central in particular seemed disappointed that so much time at the in-service meetings was spent on what they called "mechanical items," as opposed to legitimate ideas for teaching. One teacher thought that the slow break-down of the in-service meetings was a function of what she called the "schism" between those who favored the program and those whose opposition was "almost obstructionist." She gave as an example a recent meeting held at the theatre, where a group of teachers ("frustrated actors") simply would not accept the fact that theatre people had legitimate opinions.

The responses to a series of questions about the details of the program were so unanimous as to take little time to report.

Everyone seemed happy with four as the number of productions presented for the students ("In reality you can't have any more interruptions."). One teacher suggested that presenting fewer productions for the students might allow more profit-making productions for adults in the evenings.

Without exception, the teachers preferred the morning performances over afternoon performances.

The necessity of substitute teachers to cover for teachers attending with the students was not considered a serious disadvantage by any of these teachers. Most accepted the missed classes as a minor problem ("It's a lost day...there are such lost days in the ordinary classroom situation, anyway....I don't really consider it that grievous.")

The area of play selection was apparently an area in which each teacher thought he or she could make a positive contribution, and most took the opportunity to do so. The very large majority of both English and drama teachers thought that the original choice of plays announced for the first year of the program was an educational disaster ("The plays that were originally scheduled could have killed the program."). Most thought that the changes in the first year's repertoire were all to the good and that the announced program for the second year was acceptable, but some questioned individual decisions. "This year is a thousand percent better than last year. I could not get over the choices last year!....I don't know who chose them; someone who had never been a teen-ager, never worked with teen-agers, who had never even seen a teen-ager!" was the comment of one teacher at Hughes. The improved attitude of the teachers in the second was clearly the result of more than wiser decisions in play selection: it resulted directly from the teachers' conviction that their suggestions had been listened to. Several remarked that the polling of the teachers in the Spring of 1968 as to their suggestions had given them a sense of involvement that had been missing up to that time. The plaintive plea of one teacher at Hughes was typical in regard to play selection: "Keep giving us a chance to voice our opinions, whether they are chosen or not."

A sense of estrangment between the educators and the theatre people was very evident as the respondents talked of both play selection and the artistic quality of the company. In many ways the teachers conveyed the impression that the theatre people neither knew nor cared what the schools were doing. One teacher at Los Altos said, "I doubt that Mr. Jackson even knows what the B11 course of study is." She complained that in such a state of affairs it was largely impossible to develop a program which was "relevant" to the high school curriculum. "It is not a two-way street...as we were originally promised." Several teachers were very explicit on the point that play selection should have been undertaken for the whole three years of the program at one time to allow for the growth of the students during that time. For example, more than one teacher argued that the choice of The Seagull, a mistake for tenth-graders, might have been very appropriate for high school seniors.

In general, the high school teachers were in favor of greater "relevance" in the choice of plays: greater relevance to the school curriculum and greater relevance to the modern theatrical scene. This last is important: the teachers were by no means arguing for classic drama solely. A significant number asked for "more modern" plays and several suggested farces such as Charley's Aunt and Arsenic and Old Lace. Considering the response of the teachers to the first year's productions, and especially Tartuffe, there was no serious bias against "experimental" productions. However, one teacher did insist that students have to have some sense of the traditional theatre before they can fully appreciate experimentation.

As has been noted previously, the teachers from Los Altos were highly critical of the artistic quality of the Inner City Repertory Company. As a group, the drama teachers were more critical of the company than the English teachers. Two teachers, one a drama teacher, made uncomplimentary comparisons between the ICRC and local junior colleges. Several of the teachers asserted that the director of Our Town was not familiar with the play and had no feeling for it. One went so far as to say that the director had, in an in-service meeting, let slip the fact that he was not fond of the play. "Basically, he said: 'I hate the play.' I resent that; you've no idea how I resent that!" Another teacher, with wide experience in drama, accused the company of being "inconsistent" in the level of acting and directing. One English teacher commented on the level of acting with a cryptic, "C+." But for each of the negative comments there seemed to be several favorable ones. One department chairman said "I'm no expert, but I think they are tops." And a number of teachers at Hughes and Central responded with comments such as "above average" and "generally quite good."

In the second year of the project, the issue of interracial casting seemed pretty much a dead item with the teachers. Particularly at Los Altos and Central the teachers asserted that neither they nor their students noticed the casting. Some were almost amazed at their own lack of concern, and others quickly returned to what they considered more important issues. "I was pleased as all get out, but I forgot to notice. I did notice that three of the actors had speech impediments, but I did not notice the 'color' of the impediments."

At Hughes the interracial casting was apparently "noticed" and, as one black teacher put it with striking simplicity, "It's appreciated." Another teacher at Hughes noted that the truly interracial aspects of the casting made for some special insights at that all-black school: "When the Oriental girl came out and they realized that she was supposed to be George's sister, the laughter was delighted laughter." The sole exception to this approval seemed to be the casting of a Negro actor as the Gentleman Caller in Glass Menagerie; one teacher at Hughes reported that the response of the students to his portrayal in whiteface was "Oh, how could they!" The general attitude of the teachers to the acting company seemed to be summed up by the respondent who said "What disturbed me was that they didn't act very well, not their color." The only criticism of the interracial casting, said one teacher, came from the parents. "They ought to put the parents in the program," he added under his breath.

The teachers' general criticism of the technical aspects of production were neither serious nor detailed. As might be expected, the teachers from Los Altos were most dissatisfied; those from Hughes and Central could find little about which to complain. The most serious criticism was directed at the theatre itself. The majority of teachers were of the opinion that the auditorium was drab and unglamorous and that the acoustics were faulty. The most energetic critic of the theatre said, "We were told that $500,000 had been spent on the theatre; I don't know where that $500,000 went." But most teachers seemed to echo the sentiments of the one who said: "It's improving...or maybe I'm just getting used to it."

Most of the teachers were of the opinion that the program had definitely changed the attitude of the students toward theatre, though most were not able to give very specific reasons as to why they felt this way. For some it was enough to cite the excitement surrounding the trip to the theatre and the dissappointment of those that could not attend. Several teachers mentioned the increased theatre sophistication of students. One from Hughes said: "The experience we had during the first year was that the students stayed seated until they got restless--then they got up and walked out. That doesn't happen anymore. They know that there's an intermission." Another teacher at Hughes was more enthusiastic: "It has been--for this area--a godsend." Two teachers at Los Altos thought that the program had affected the students attitude adversely ("Enthusiasm has dwindled"). All but a very few English teachers admitted that they could see no improvement in the attitude of the students toward English as a result of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project.

As the teachers attempted to express the attitudes of their departments and their school faculty toward the project, it becomes clear that there were wide variations in faculty responses to the program, and that teachers saw themselves as more appreciative of the program than the average teacher. At Los Altos, the general position seemed to fall somewhere between the teacher who said "My department is not excited by the project" and the one who commented "Generally it's considered a pain in the neck." Even at Central there was reported to be a growing resistance to the Project. One teacher said: "It's worthwhile, but I would rather see the money used for books or smaller classes." Another pointed out that the "initial enthusiasm has dissipated, as it does with any project." Only at Hughes was the faculty support for the program fairly unanimous, according to these respondents. The department chairman reported that "This semester I have had teachers wanting to teach B11 English as they have never wanted to before," and teachers from other disciplines had tried "to work their classes into the program." None of the teachers interviewed could recall any specific serious complaints either from their fellow English teachers or from others on the faculty.

While the majority of the teachers could not say that the program had changed their attitude toward the theatre (most maintained that they had liked and attended theatre before the program and continued to do so) a few reported that their view of the theatre had changed. One reported that he had "discovered" the theatre only since the advent of the program ("I come away cleansed!"). Another reported that her idea of theatre deportment had become modified: "I had some conservative, traditional feelings toward drama, that a play should be presented to a very polite and proper audience; that it shouldn't be disturbed by the audience in any way. These kids do [disturb it] and it's better. They are completely human." Several reported that if they were in a school which did not have a theatre program of such a type, they would attempt to get one going.

Finally, the teachers had a number of suggestions for improving the program. Basically, these fell into three major categories: (1) improvement of the artistic quality of the company, (2) improvement of school-theatre relations, and (3) improvement of the program within the context of the high-school curriculum. All of the major suggestions for improving the artistic company came from the teachers at Los Altos; these included finding a new company to produce the plays, making it more difficult to get into and stay in the ICRC, finding a first-rate professional director, finding leadership with some feeling for the demands of education for, as one teacher put it, "until the theatre gets rid of its antagonism, we are going to have a hard time of it." As regards the improvement of relations between the schools and the theatre, the major theme was that there must be more regard on the part of the theatre for the feelings and expertise of the teachers. Several thought that the fact that they were teachers immediately prevented the theatre people from listening to any suggestion they had to make. As one teacher put it, "I've been a person for more years than I've been an English teacher--and I think I ought to get a little credit for that!" As might be expected, the sought-for "mutual respect," would make itself felt in the choice of plays. "We have many drama teachers in the system who damn well know what goes with kids," said one teacher who was particularly exasperated with what she felt was the theatre's contention that only a theatre person knows what students want and need. This same teacher went on to recommend a selling job on the part of the schools to whip up enthusiasm for the program "...by an honest-to-God used car sales man, not 'this is a board-mandated program, so it's what are you going to do' which is how we have gotten it." Finally, several teachers recommended asking the students what plays they would like to see. Other suggestions from the teachers dealt with the operation of the program within the schools. These included suggestions to "streamline" the administration of the program by such methods as having all parents sign a single trip-slip for the entire year. Also, several thought that that attention should be given to planning the whole program to give some "logical sequence" to the plays seen and studied. Some teachers wanted to see more students involved in the program--especially grades other than the target grade--and others wanted fewer students to be sent. Those who argued for this latter position were generally asking that the program be more selective, though the basis for selection should be other than IQ or grades, one teacher was quick to add. One teacher argued that audiences should be "more culturally homogeneous," especially since no real effort was being made to mix the audiences--they remained segregated by school even though seated in the same auditorium. Another teacher, from Central, thought that it was a waste of money to include the "overly advantaged" schools in the program at all. Several teachers could think of no important changes which they would make in the program as it presently stood, and one could only respond "Keep the program going; let's not drop it at this point."

Students

With the exception of the counselors, the students were the most uninformed about the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project in Los Angeles. At the same time, they had developed some of the most varied, forceful, and interesting opinions concerning the Project.

The actual goals of the entire project were not clear to the students; nor did it appear that they had, as a group, given much attention to the issue of goals. The most common response was that the Project aimed to provide students with a general exposure to "culture," or, as one student put it "get [the students] culturized." In most cases, the wording of the individual student's response showed his attitude toward the exposure: a few seemed truly grateful for the opportunity; most indicated a somewhat weary resignation, as if this building of culture was a necessary part of compulsory education. The appropriateness of the experience was questioned by a significant minority of the students. One girl from Los Altos felt that the program was designed for those who needed exposure to "culture." It was for "the underprivileged kids, and we just sort of got roped into it." Several students at Hughes accepted the same premise but with different implications: The Project lets "people have a chance to see plays so that they can't complain that they never saw one."

A large percentage of the students at Los Altos high saw racial integration of audiences as a major goal of the program; a few at Hughes thought the same; no student at Central mentioned integration as being a goal of the program.

"Audience building" was mentioned as a goal of the program by only a few students, almost all at Los Altos.

Even fewer suggested that the program aimed at teaching audience deportment; one who did said the students were "learning how we are supposed to react." While students at Hughes were as critical as any of rowdy audiences, not one suggested that it might be an aim of the project to improve their behavior.

Only a few students (10%) interpreted the project as a logical extention of the English curriculum; of those, most thought it helped students understand dramatic literature. One boy pointed out that the Project "helps break the monotony of English," and another thought that "any change in teaching is good."

Of all students interviewed, 10% had no idea why the Project was undertaken. Of the remaining 90% nearly all thought the Project was achieving whatever goals they thought the Project had. At Hughes, however, roughly a quarter of the students interviewed had moderate to severe reservations about the success of the program. These ranged from the thoughtful remarks of a girl who questioned whether either attitudes or behaviors could be changed at her age ("When you get in high school your mind is pretty much set.") to the boy who said "Most people see it as a chance to get out of class. I don't get nothing out of it." One boy ridiculed the whole idea of educational goals, saying the aim was to let poor people see "...the other man's world. Everybody's supposed to be glad...[but there is] no education involved."

The variety of responses makes it nearly impossible to report in any detail those things about the program which students found the best and worst.

A very common "best thing about the Project" was the integrated audiences. One girl from Hughes reported her delight at white reaction to A Raisin in the Sun. A girl from Los Altos said "I think the best thing is for the little rich kids...to see what the other half is like." But several students also rated integration the worst thing, but, unlike adults making the complaints, these students felt integration did not go far enough: "...the discussion should be with the kids from other schools," "...all the blacks sit here and all the whites sit here....If we sat together we could all laugh together."

A large proportion of the students thought the quality of acting and productions was the best part of the Project; an equally large proportion thought them the worst.

A fairly large percentage of all students thought "getting out of school" was the best part of the Project; an equally large percentage, nearly all from Los Altos, thought lost school time the worst aspect of the Project.

Other "bests" included: "helps you visualize the play," "it's free," "the books," and the ride to the theatre.

The most common "worst," however, was audience deportment: the noise level in the theatre, the conduct of students in the lobbies and rest rooms, the interruption of performances, and the generally rowdy behavior in the theatre. Many students wished some way could be found to prevent the uninterested troublemakers from attending. One boy spelled out the dilemma clearly when he said the best thing about the project was the fact that all students were essentially forced to attend. Then he listed as being the worst thing about the program the fact that they were forced to attend.

Many students listed as a "worst" the lack of modern plays in the Project and one complained that there seemed no pattern to the plays they saw: they were not "progressive."

Other worsts included: "the theatre, period," poor casting, censorship, "you know what's going to happen," only the B-11's go, "no stories about violence and gang fights," missing nutrition and sometimes lunch, crowded buses, not enough action (in the plays), "unnatural" to see a play in the morning, and "no educational benefit."

Despite their many criticisms of the operation of the Project, a very large majority of the students thought that it was worth the time and money spent on it. At Los Altos, where both the teachers and students had been most critical of the productions seen at the Inner City Cultural Center, all the students interviewed supported the continuance of the Project--though many specifically pointed out that it was the concept of the Project they supported, and not its reality. At Central only one interviewed student thought the Project a waste of time and money; several implied by their answers that it would be ungrateful of the schools not to see the plays "considering all the work the actors put into it"; one boy suggested, somewhat wistfully, that "It will probably help in college." At Hughes, where teacher response had been very supportive, nearly 25% of the students interviewed thought the program a waste of time and money.

When asked to summarize the attitude of their friends toward the Project, most students divided them into two groups: those that truly enjoyed attending the plays and those that went to the theatre solely to "get out of school." Most either stated or implied that the second group was larger than the first. Indeed, as students from each school pointed out, if the program were held after school or on weekends, only a small percentage would take any initiative to attend. The few interviewees who were willing to identify themselves as attending only to escape classes defended their position with vigor: a boy from Hughes said that everyone publicly pretended to be grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Project "because it's free." But most found the plays boring. However, another boy from Hughes saw these social rituals from another perspective: "When I'm with my friends I say I just want to get out of class, but really I want to see the play." Others, he thought, were doing the same, giving the general impression of widespread desire to escape from class. One could not doubt the sincerity of the girl from Central who, because of a scheduling problem, had attended an evening performance of Our Town: "I took my girl friend...[and we] sat there and cried! Oh, it was so good! And we felt like it was something we could get together later on and go to. You know, save up all our Scout money and go and see another one."

Not all teachers see the benefit of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, if the student opinion means anything. Nearly all the students thought that their English teachers supported the Project, but a great many detected reluctance on the part of teachers of other subjects. This resistance expresses itself in a variety of ways--from coercion not to attend ("What's more important, getting an education or being entertained?") to simple refusal to sign permission slips. Several students sympathized with these uncooperative teachers, pointing out that the interruption of their schedule was an inconvenience; one boy openly took their side ("We could be learning Algebra, which would really prepare us for life!") Significantly, no student from Hughes reported any resistance to their missing class to attend the theatre; all reported teacher reaction to the program as favorable. (One boy found hypocrisy in this: "They all say they like it, but they fall asleep.")

Considering the part that personal opinion plays in the matter of play selection, it is fair to say that the students are, in the main, satisfied with the choice of plays they have been seeing. This does not mean there are not points of disagreement. For example, several students noted that while play selections had been acceptable, they thought the students should have more voice in the process--as a matter of principle if nothing else. Others were philisophical, noting that the plays they would really like to see would be unacceptable to the school administration and the teachers. (Hair was the show most commonly mentioned). Perhaps a third of the students made reference to those external constraints working on the Project, e.g. "If public opinion and the laws didn't interfere, [we] would be able to see better plays." One girl faced the issue directly when she acknowledged a conflict between what the schools wanted and what the students would like: "I don't think it's fair to have a compromise between the teacher and the kids, because the program is more for the kids than it is for the teachers."

At Los Altos and Central the complaints against play selection were generally pleas for more modern plays or specific titles of current Broadway successes. At Hughes, however, the students argued for more relevance to student life as they saw it. "They should have a play like at school, with kids going to school and a fight at lunch time and all that junk." "They need more plays on students--black students especially." "More plays on black and white--not just the casts but the themes." At least one girl was a little tired of the plays about issues and asked for a frivolous play, one that's "just crazy."

Most students found the level of acting in the company adequate though not superlative. Some questioned individual roles and others criticized poor actors appearing in a series of major roles. A few thought the actors acceptable but hampered by poor direction.

The costumes and scenery were well received by the sample of students interviewed. The settings for A Midsummers Night's Dream were especially popular. It was apparent that many students did not have very high expectations in this regard. One girl described the settings and costumes as "about what you would expect for this kind of program." The students from Hughes were particularly anxious to see the scenery be "more realistic," " change more often," and "not leave so much to the imagination."

In asking the students their opinions concerning the casting of roles at the Inner City Repertory Company, no mention was made in the first phrasing of the question of the interracial casting policy. If the student did not mention race, the interviewer then brought the question up. The aim was to see if race was one of the things students recalled about the casting of plays at the ICRC. *In the majority of cases, the students did not comment upon the racial policy of the ICRC until the matter was brought up by an adult.* Even then, the matter of race was not perceived as an important element in casting. (Not nearly as important, for example, as the vocal qualities of an actress who had appeared in several plays.) The students at Los Altos were critical of the casting of a black actor as the Gentleman Caller in *The Glass Menagerie*, though chiefly on the basis of unsuccessful make-up. The matter was one of even less concern at Central. And only one student at Hughes mentioned race at all (Oberon and Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* should have been of the same race, she thought.) The inescapable conclusion is that race of the actors was not or has ceased to be of much importance to the students. The degree of the "color blindness" may be shown in the case of the boy in a group interview who could not convince three of his friends that an actor in the play they had all seen the previous day was of Japanese extraction. Race, as one observer concluded, seems to be an adult hang-up.

Almost to a person the students thought the productions were improving and that this year's productions were superior to those the year before. (This last judgment was in some cases made on the basis of only one play seen in 1968-9.) Several students noted that even if the production were not better, they were enjoying them more because they had become more knowledgable and relaxed: "The first time I went and the second time, I was nervous. I thought 'Oh boy, I'm really going to do something weird'...I thought the actors were going to forget their lines. I wasn't really watching the play, I was so nervous." A significant percentage thought the audience behavior was also improving ("At least they don't cheer anymore... one time about 50 boys stood up and went 'Not - tre - Dame - Rah!' Wow," one student said, shaking his head in disbelief.)

More than half of the students reported that they mentioned the play to their parents but few indicated that they discussed it in any detail. Part of the problem lay in communication between teen-agers and parents in general. One girl said, "They're not really interested--so I never tell them I've been." "They say 'Oh, that's nice,' and continue doing what they are doing," shrugged another. On the other hand, one girl reported that "I practically have to act the whole thing out." (Apparently she acted well because her parents attended an evening performance at the ICCC on her advice.) It is fair to say the effect of the students on the play-going habits of their parents has been negligible.

As usual, the opportunity to suggest changes in the program brought a wide variety of ideas from the students. The greatest number had to do with improving the theatre. These included everything from moving back to the Lindy Opera House to improving the sound system ("That theatre! The fourth wall is about 10 feet thick!") to enlarging the rest rooms. Audiences should be allowed to sit where they please, thought many, and schools should be "mixed up more," to stimulate school pride and reduce rowdy behavior. One student from Hughes suggested that the white schools not be allowed to attend with Hughes, "those white kids are too noisy." Many students were in favor of extending the question and answer period to every school and extending its length.

Other students suggested expanding the program to other grades, perhaps the whole school, and starting the program in the lower grades. The teaching of the plays came under fire: never read the play before seeing it, provide enough books to take home, toughen the teaching of the plays in class, and take the pressure of missing other classes off the students. At least one student suggested an exploration of Saturday performances; many asked for less crowded busses.

End of Dr. Hansen's

Report

Part Five

theatre company reactions

THEATRE COMPANY REACTIONS

Aside from interviews and conversations such as those reported below, CEMREL gathered relatively little data on the impact of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project on the theatre companies in Rhode Island and New Orleans. There were two reasons for this. First, the most important effects of the Project upon theatre companies were publicly visible in its work, and no elaborate research was necessary to establish whether exciting, high quality shows were being produced or whether a company was developing artistically or whether the company's artists had their hearts in their work. Second, we were several times rebuffed by theatre company members when we tried to involve them in studies and we finally got discouraged. Not unexpectedly, many of the artists were hostile to the idea of doing behavioral research in the arts and suspicious of its practicioners. But, more to the point, the artists simply were not interested in the types of assessments we were qualified to conduct, except insofar as they might, in the long run, show that theatre was important enough to students to deserve continued financial support from educational agencies.

The theatre people, however, were always generous with their time, and, over the years, there were many hours of conversation--much of it tape recorded--between members of the CEMREL staff and theatre personnel. In the sections that follow, selected passages from transcriptions from some of these interviews in Rhode Island and New Orleans are reprinted and other interviews are summarized. (Other reactions from theatre company members may be found in the section of this volume containing letters from the principle figures in the Project)

Relatively few of the interviews are excerpted or summarized because the actors and the artists in the resident companies were much likelier than students or educators to agree among themselves about the questions they were asked, so that there was a great deal of repetition of basically the same opinions from interview to interview. None of the interviews with members of the Inner City company in Los Angeles are reprinted here because that company was the subject of a separate study, conducted by two young ladies from the CEMREL staff who "lived in" at the ICCC for the entire 1969-70 season. Their "history" of the ICC--with an emphasis upon the effects of the ELT Project upon the structure, morale, and creativity of the ICCC repertory company--is scheduled to be printed separately as a supplement to our report on the Project.

The speakers in the interviews quoted below are not identified, but each can probably be quickly named by anyone who is familiar with the Project (and the names make no difference to anyone else). In all cases, the interviewer's questions and remarks are in italics, with the answers in normal type.

Rhode Island

Do you think that the objectives of the Trinity Square Company differ from those of the school systems in Rhode Island involved in Project Discovery? If you think they differ could you tell me how? Your goals from the school systems.

Well, I really don't have any first hand information. I'll give you a couple of opinions on things I have from hearsay. For example, at the beginning of the year we wanted to do Three Penny Opera for the school kids but the school board said, "No, that has violence in it." So they let us do Julius Caesar instead. I don't know what the school board's goals are. If they want everyone to say how nice the plays are, then they're wrong. That's not what Trinity Square wants, we do not do plays to please the public, we do plays that we think are worthwhile doing. There is an entertainment value and they should be entertained but we don't want to entertain them with things that we don't consider are worthwhile. This may be snobbish on our part but we always try to do a play that has earned its place in the world's literature or we think may earn its place. If the school board wants to give these kids a rewarding experience, that's what we want to do, too. Trinity is, I think, so very thankful that we have been able to be chosen by the government to produce these plays to a high school. First of all, it's allowed us to have better actors, to pay our actors more, and to keep more of them, so that the quality of our plays hopefully will become better and better. We feel a definite committment to the students to do our very best for them and to make them appreciative. We want to make the theatre experience for them a rich one and we'd love to make them theatre addicts so that they have to go to the theatre.

Do you think that the objectives of the schools and your own have become more compatible?

Yes. At the start the school boards were worrying: "Oh golly, they're going to do dirty plays down there for our school kids" or "They're going to do this and we have no interest in that at all." I think perhaps they were a little afraid because the general opinion is that theatre folk are a little shady to begin with. Naturally they were a little leery of us, but as they have come to know us and see what our real true aims are, and as we have come to know them and know their fears and what they are trying to do, I think we have gotten together. I think we are becoming closer and closer just in the two years. Over a period of ten years who knows what would happen?

I'd like to ask you now what effects the educational committments that are inherent in this Project Discovery have had on the actors?

We haven't reached a solution to that yet. The demands are more than most actors are used to. For example, we get up early in the morning which actors don't usually. We can weather that. But we do one performance at nine in the morning and then we do another one at one and then we come back the next day and do another one at nine and another one at one. The experience of acting on the stage is one that should be a fresh one and a total commitment with every bit of energy you have. Now if you continue to do so many of these big performances close together and so many times then finally at one point you're going to become so tired you'll say, well I just don't care that much anymore, and that's a bad thing to happen to an actor because then the kids are cheated and the actor cheats himself. We can't afford to let us just go lazily along, so I don't know how you're going to meet that problem. But that's one of the demands that I think is a hazard. On the other hand, the demands of doing these high school performances has made us become much more sensitive and much more demanding of ourselves because high school audiences are tough, they demand the best of you and if you don't give it to them they'll let you know right then and there. They're not very polite about it and consequently it makes an actor on the ball every second he's out there, and if a scene doesn't go right he better damn well find out how to make it go right, or he's going to suffer through forty performances of the kid's not being interested. (I think it makes you a better actor by performing for high school kids.)

* * * *

Would you compare the Trinity Square Repertory Company as it was in the beginning of the project with how it is today? For example, has there been an increase or decrease in its cohesiveness and its morale?

Increase--it fluctuated at first. In the beginning last year, morale dipped a bit and, you know, people were dragging around, saying "Oh, what am I doing here?" or something like that. But we somehow got back together, pulled it together, and it is so cohesive now, it's like ensemble playing--it's a joy to be on stage.

How about yourself?

Well, for myself it's been fabulous. You know, as a Negro actor, I've never had the chance to play, you know, in Shaw, Ibsen. Maybe in a college production--but of course I went to Howard University so that was an all Negro production. But I have grown as an actor since I've been here. Maybe I can't look in the mirror and see it, but I know. I've done Shakespeare that I've never done before, and you know my first time I was scared to death about it. And I'm playing the part in Enemy of the People, you know, where instead of being always the good guy or playing a cameo role, like I played on Broadway, I'm in a play now where I get booed, I love that--they hate me! I'm with the majority and that's kind of a nice feeling instead of always being with the minority.

What effects have the Project Discovery had on the community? Does the community appear to have gained an appreciation of the theatre as a performing art?

I think it has to a great extent. These kids are going out and spreading the word, you know, and the community has become greatly aware of Project Discovery, of theatre, and I'm sure there are a small amount of students who have gotten their parents to come and see the shows, and everything, and there were those fortunate few whose parents were subscribers to a season and they could go home and discuss it, you know, the particular plays--but I think we're getting through to the community a great deal.

* * * *

Let's think of your own goals here, but then, too, the educational system's goals.

Right, well, I think in all honesty we can't credit the educational system with creating Project Discovery here. I think we happen to be a theatre in an area that was once very rich in theatre going and that kind of heritage and culture, and in the last twenty years has come on very bad times and indeed there was no professional theatre existing at all in the state or in the area. And so when a professional theatre was created here it meant that there had to be real grass roots worked on to build an audience. And Project Discovery offered many advantages from the theatre's point of view. Once we got into it, we realized that we had to, as well, give something to education, in other words, we couldn't just take it all. I think the reason for creating Project Discovery, like all creations, were very selfish reasons, you know, good creative reasons. I don't think it had anything to do with any kind of lofty ideas about learning to read better, or learning to read dramatic literature, or something. I don't think any of that entered into it, at least not here.

Do you feel that these original goals have been implemented as the project has gone through its second season?

Yes, I think that was one of the original goals, as Project Discovery came along and then grew, as we got further and further into that and began to realize what some of the enormous problems facing us were, and indeed we became more conscious of the wall of resistance from the educators to changes in attitude toward art. When we began to realize how complex and difficult that was, then we began to mount all kinds of attacks on this wall that had been built through indifference, through lack of real association with the arts and so forth. Have we achieved the original goals? I would say those goals have been far exceeded. And the goals continue to change, you know. We have given plays, we have brought 40,000 students to the plays, we have worked out transportation problems, we've worked out all kinds of problems.

You seem to be achieving a greater compatibility between the theatre and the school administrators involved with this project. Do you feel you've made progress in working together better?

Well, the issue is continually clouded by things like the general attitude of "Since we're all in it together let's all vote on it and let's let the majority decide." This is very dangerous policy with something like the theatre. For instance, if the stage manager lets the actors decide when the play is to begin, then it's very apt to be a late beginning in the play. And if on the other hand the artistic head of the theatre allows a policy--an artistic policy--to be voted on by people at large, it's very apt to be a very vague artistic policy. That is not to say that everything must not be taken into consideration. But when you touch on something very touchy, like play selection for instance, I can only say directly and right out, that any plays selected by a committee most likely will never come to anything worthwhile. It's a very difficult touchy thing to talk about, you know. If we're going to work out a new curriculum for the math department for instance, we don't ask for a committee vote of English teachers about that, do we? And yet we somehow feel that in this particular field that there's something very democratic about it and everybody should be given their voice.

What demands does the meeting of the educational commitments inherent in this project make on the actors and how do these demands differ from those normally made on a member of a company such as yours?

Well, it's been very difficult convincing everybody connected with the theatre that this was absolutely essential to the life of the theatre, you know. It's been very difficult. All the nonsense about the actors just love playing for the students. You know, that's just bull. I mean, when you come right down to it, the commitment has got to be to the work. And we have got to realize that what is necessary is a total commitment to the work itself. It becomes possible to push grandmother off that roof because you've got to have that roof to rehearse on. In the case of the actors, of course, it makes terrible demands on them. It makes horrendous demands on them. I think you'll find if you talk to the actors in this company, there is an excitement about what they're doing, that they feel that they are real pioneer ladies and gentlemen, you know, in covered wagons charging across the prairie there. That's good.

I think that you've got to be very tough in your handling of the actors, and you've got to be very tough in your whole administrative process. I think your artistic philosophy cannot be pulpy in the middle, you know, and if it is pulpy in the middle, you don't stand a chance. Because the forces of indifference, and apathy, and downright resistance to any kind of shifting of attitudes toward our art, they're very strong, those forces, and I think you must be equally strong in your ability to meet them. Maureen Stapleton had said that actors have to be as clever as rats to survive. And I say that artistic directors in this regional theatre must be as clever as rats to survive, and in the case of artistic directors in relationship to education, I think you must be clever as a rat and tough as a crocodile and mean as a snake in order to deal with all the forces that you are daily contacting.

Have you over the last two seasons been in the schools yourself?

Oh, many many many times, many times. Every time we initiate a new program, every department is vitally involved with that program, you see. It comes back to basic philosophy: I don't believe in children's theatre, I've never believed that you could instill in somebody some kind of relationship to the living art by seeing a production of "Rumplestiltskin." I mean it's just not possible. So consequently, whenever we initiate one of these new happenings, or these new experiments, it's a Rhode Show, it's a single performer, say it's people putting together a scene, say it's a panel--all of us are involved in it. I didn't direct any of the Rhode Shows. Various actors did that, various directors that were around. And yet when we began to put it together, we had meeting after meeting that involved me, that involved Richard Cumming, that involved Rose Valiely, that involved the heads of the costume departments, and so on, in which we talked about basic philosophies and what we were trying to achieve with this. It's very easy to come with kind of sweeping statements like, "We are not going into the schools to entertain." It's very easy to say that. And yet we keep running into reality. We wanted to set up Rhode Show on a real classroom basis. We would limit the number of students to 100. That would be the absolute maximum. The very first school that called said they had 300 and could they bring 300? So there are certain faults in education that one must continually battle, and that we must continually make them aware that we are not show business, that we are not hothouse plants from another planet. And there are certain very basic attitudes, you know, like "Oh, we just love Trinity Square, it's wonderful, you come and entertain the kids anytime that you want to." Very bad. Very bad bad business, you see, because we're not about entertainment in that thing. That is secondary. If by the way of what we're trying to do, a person is entertained, wonderful. You know, we're not there to torture them certainly....

The idea of Rhode Show grew basically out of the continual kind of debate on whether or not the theatre experience is possible in the classroom. So the need for Rhode Show came out of that. We put that together along with, you know, Three Penny Opera, something that I had been very anxious to do for the students. I decided against doing it for the students even though Dr. O'Connor had said to me, "If you want to go through with this, we will stand behind you," meaning the superintendent's association. But the head of the Catholic schools had said to me, "We will pull our students out if you do Brecht for them." Well, of course that kind of thing is like a frightful choice, because one's integrity is involved, you know, all of those things. We chose not to go through with Three Penny Opera. We played it for the public and indeed did get an overwhelming response and had the greatest student turnout to pay full prices to see the play that we've ever had for a play. I kept it from coming to a head, is what I'm trying to say. If I had really thrown it open to the public, it would've been a nasty, difficult, you know, debating kind of thing. But because we were face to face with the problem, then I just chose to not make our stand at that moment, you see, I chose to make our stand in other ways, so we chose not to do Three Penny Opera. But we had certain things from it in Rhode Show. There's Lucy's Song, if you'll remember, about the lady debating with herself: should she have had this affair with this man? So we used Lucy's Song in putting the thing together.

The students have been introduced into live drama, in quotes, have you any comments on the way that this has been done?

I can only say, "Do you believe in compulsory education? Do you believe that students should go to school? Do you think it's necessary whether they want to learn to read or not?" I can only say to you, "Yes, you believe in that." Yes, I believe that art absolutely has a place in the secondary level of education, absolutely. And we must not, we must not negate it, or else we're going to end up with a whole world of bowling teams, you know. It's just frightening to think that in most places in the Midwest and practically the whole South, people will live their whole lives with no art. And I'm not talking about the poor, I'm talking about our affluent middle class, who live their whole lives with no art in their lives, and Oh Jesus, what a sad life. Yes, I think it should be compulsory.

Have the schools' attitudes sometimes tended to close up the experience instead of helping to open it up?

Right. I think the teacher sometimes is not fully aware of the swinging wonderful kind of experience that the live art is, you know. And that the people sometimes go to the theatre the way they go to the P.T.A. or the way they go to church, you know, like it's some kind of obligation or some kind of duty or something. Boy, I can only say that if you really are hungry and then you just really do know that you're going to walk down the block and there's a marvelous steak house there that you're going to have a wonderful dinner at, you're very anxious to go, right. And the theatre is aesthetic, spiritual food, and if we can bring the teachers unanimlusly to the fact that, boy, we're going to get to take the students to this kind of rich, good experience, they'd stop trying to hem in the experience or to box it in in some way so that you don't get the total emotional thing--to box it in with some kind of politeness of attitude or some kind of suppression of one's feelings. I think that's wrong. But on the other hand, I don't go along with gum on the bottom of the seats, or throwing things at the actors, I think that's wrong too.

What has Project Discovery done to the company?

The company is larger obviously than it was before we took on Project Discovery. We play approximately ten times as many performances as we did before Project Discovery came. I would say, this is another sweeping statement, and I don't mean it as any reflection on anybody except ourselves, if we had not been a theatre and a damn good company before we tied into this educational project, the project would have killed us; we would not have survived it. We were able to survive that first year, which as you know, was a grim time. You know we were able to survive that year because we had a history of survival and we knew that we could do it.

The thing that Project Discovery did was to make me search deeply into the audience and find out when certain kind of work was being done that first year it was being received with a certain kind of apathy. You know, that I did not understand, or did not believe that it was possible. For instance, with a Chekhov play like Three Sisters. To receive great critical acclaim from the press and have the students strangely indifferent to it. I had been fed on all of the cliches; that if it's really good, then the kids will buy it. Nonsense, nonsense! You know, I also found it difficult to understand reactions to Shaw's St. Joan. The philosophy, the contrasting social themes would probably escape them, but I thought that they would relate to certain kind of tyranny of the religious aspects, and so forth. That wasn't at all what they related to; they related to something else. They related to a teenager in rebellion against her elders. And so, so those are things which you learn about it. And I don't know, I say that I have nothing but just real admiration, real open-mouth wonder at a place that has gone in and in one year established a theatre and an educational arm of that theatre. I mean that, boy, that's some going! But I say I couldn't have done it if Project Discovery had been planted onto Rhode Island. We would not have a theatre here today.

Before we stop talking, what changes would you recommend to improve the operation of Project Discovery next year?

Of course, there have been lots of failures, to me. It's not a simple problem; it's very complex. I think that DeeDee Cumming and Rose Valley would talk by the hour about whether it is necessary to put a play script in the hand of every student. I think that too much of the budget was being spent for books. There are certain other things, I'm sure, just about the mechanics of busing, the mechanics of information, from the company out to the schools. There are certain things about the mechanics of that that should be changed. Certain kind of broad philosophies, too. Today I have no fear anymore in saying, if this is to be a project where artistic policy is to be voted on by the school systems, it must be destroyed. It must be destroyed! We do what we do, and we do it well! Education does what it does and it does it well. For us to come together there has got to be some kind of mutual respect, and the minute it would become necessary for teachers to come into the working part of the theatre and to have voice in that, well, then in that instance the project would have to be dropped.

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Eight actors and actresses in the Trinity Square Company who had been involved in the Project for two or three seasons were interviewed near the end of the 1968-69 season. They discussed two sets of goals of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project: (1) to introduce high school students to live theatre, assisting them in their understanding of dramatic literature and stimulating and broadening their lives; and (2) to assist a resident theatre company to grow and establish itself. The interviewees were unanimous in their affirmation of the success of Project Discovery in terms of these goals. Five of them insisted, however, that its ultimate success would depend, to some extent, on the future influence that theatre would have in the student's lives, and that that could not immediately be determined. One actor pointed to the great growth in interest in the theatre which had occurred in so many of the high school students in Rhode Island. He said, enthusiastically, "They're coming to the theatre workshop activities voluntarily, bringing their friends, and promoting the future of the theatre and its educational committment, as well!" Another member of the company, commenting on the success of Project Discovery, confidently explained that it had to have been a significant experience for the students because the director and the company were so good! His conviction was that productions of the clarity and quality such as most of them had been were bound to have enriched the lives of the students. This opinion was shared by other members of the Trinity Square Company. An actor said that he felt the students had gained substantially in interest and knowledge of the theatre but that ultimately the mission of this program was for them to maintain "a long range interest in drama as a living art form far beyond this immediate experience." Other members of the company who were interviewed echoed this concern with such statements as: "I hope ten years from now they'll remember Macbeth,and Julius Caesar, and that theatre will be an inherent part of their lives and that if they don't have it, they'll miss it!" and "The kids seem to be excited and responsive to what they've experienced, but their future attitude toward theatre and theatre-going habits will be more important."

The respondents, when questioned about conflicts between the theatre company and the educators, were more divided in their responses. Five of the interviewees indicated that there had been no real conflicts. Three of them, however, felt there had been conflicts which were significant enough to mention.

One actor said that the educators and theatre company had been successful "in working together toward a joint goal of excellence." He added, however, that the company had been fortunate in not having to produce all of its shows exclusively for the high school audiences. He felt it was an important factor in the success of the Project that the company had been able to maintain two separate theatres and two sets of patrons.

Another actor, a strong believer in the importance of the theatre project for Rhode Island youth, did think that conflict was apparent at times; however, he said that since a theatre company was not a teaching organization, it did not make demands on its student audiences ("but we do like to have their attention!"). He continued that there were bound to be some conflicts in dealing with an educational system which had been operating under the same rules for years and expecting certain observable results. He pointed to the production of Macbeth as having upset the teachers' classroom approach. This production, for example, turned the witches into comic characters and had Macbeth killed by a mob instead of in a hand to hand duel with MacDuff. Changes such as these, he claimed, disrupted the teachers' attempts to keep Macbeth a disciplined learning experience. He said "It was as if the teachers, in their protest, were saying 'We have nailed Macbeth to the wall for all time, and that's how we teach it.'" Going a bit further, in reference to several particularily innovative productions of the current season, he pointed to the dangers which can confront the teachers when the kids take the sense of excitement generated by the production back into the classroom. He felt that good teachers could harness this enthusiasm, but that average and below average teachers might have found it threatening.

Several members of the company indicated that they were unclear what the goals of the educational system were for the students, but that there sometimes seemed to be opposing aims or expectations involved. An actress put it this way, "Trinity's ideas about what they want the students to get from the experience are different than those of the educational systems involved." She felt that "one shouldn't be so definite about what one expects from the young" and that the theatre experience should be primarily a freeing, alive one, in which students learn more about themselves and the life around them. One actor referred to "subjecting of the theatre company's goals to certain controls which the educational system imposed on the Project's operation." Another said there was not really a difference in their goals, but a difference in attitude toward the ways of achieving these goals. He added that he felt that they both wanted the experience to be stimulating and meaningful in the students' lives. Then he went on to say that at one point a group of the educators had strongly objected to The Three Penny Opera as a play-choice for the Project, although the company wanted very much to do it. It was understood by the Repertory Company that the principal objection to the play was that it contained "too much violence." A decision was reached that Julius Caesar would be a suitable substitute. The actor laughingly recalled:

> So, Julius Caesar was produced instead of The Three Penny Opera. There was much more violence in Julius Caesar--an assassination, three suicides and a lynching all took place on stage!

He went on to suggest that Brecht somehow caused educators to feel uneasy and threatened. It was as if his work were "something vaguely tainted, which they thought would lead kids down a false and devious path." He concluded,

> So, the educators and the theatre company both want the experience to have meaning for the students, but we think we can do it through Brecht and Pinter, too!

The interviewees also commented on activities in addition to the plays, which involved them with students. Only one of those interviewed had not participated in supplementary activities. Two had been involved in discussions with the students after performances or in school assemblies. The other five actors had been extensively involved for several years in the theatre workshops, the Rhode Show, and school visits. There was general agreement that these activities had added an important dimension to the live theatre experience. Several of the actors volunteered that this extension of services was mutually beneficial--that the actors had developed more respect for the student audiences and the students, in turn, had developed more rapport with the actors through their work together. One put it this way:

> They realize more fully that we're all working toward the end of making the plays enjoyable and exciting for them and they have accepted us as a part of their community.

Another said that the activities were very important for the kids because they showed that "we cared enough to come there and talk to them and they've gotten to know us." Several actors mentioned that they had appreciated the closer personal contact with the school administrators and teachers which these activities had afforded them.

In reference to the Rhode Show one actor said that participation in this show was more valuable for him than the performances he had done in the Rhode Island School of Design Theatre. He and a fellow actor both pointed to the quickness of the students to receive and respond to new ideas. Another actor who had been very active in the Saturday workshops, teaching an acting class, reported,

> They were exciting and rewarding for three reasons: (1) the kids have volunteered to come and have come under their own steam--no bussing; (2) they've liked the workshops so much that many have been staying for three hours or more on Saturday instead of just the two hours of classes; and (3) the actor-student contact has been rewarding, affording the students the opportunity to face realistically the hardships of a career in the theatre.

Observations on student behavior in the theatre over the last several seasons were numerous and positive. Seven of the eight interviewees agreed that there were definite improvements in student behavior as Project Discovery progressed. The eighth actor presented his own theory about the most important change in behavior which he felt had taken place. He said that he felt the change in behavior was not so much in the students in the theatre as it had been in the director, Adrian Hall. The actor felt certain that Mr. Hall's behavior was affected by his student audiences and that he had succeeded in getting closer to them in his productions by so much of what he did. He referred to Billy Budd as an example, citing the use of a simpler story line, faster changes, and more action, all of which produced intense responses from the student audiences. This actor said of student behavior that it was "typical" that they did participate--displaying either boisterousness or boredom as the occasion demanded. He said he felt they would be reacting the same way in ten years. It was generally agreed that the students were good audiences and had learned to listen better. Members of the company mentioned, however, that there still remained some unpredictable variation of response to productions among the various schools. One actor recounted as an example that the company had been dreading the attendance of one particular school at Macbeth because of its notoriously bad behavior in the past. He said that they had resolved to stop the show if necessary but then they were amazed to find this school completely absorbed in the performance and so excited by it that the students gave the cast a standing ovation at the end. The actors were in agreement, as well, that the students were good audiences when the performances were good. One added to this,

> They'll go as far as we can take them. They will rarely violate a good scene when we are acting well.

Three repertory members compared the behavior of the students for the first production, St. Joan, with that for the last production of the third season, Billy Budd. One actor said it was like comparing "night and day". Another said the improvement was incredible and that during St. Joan" it was a rare audience which really listened and was really there, and now it is a rare audience which doesn't behave, listen, and respond! A third member of the company compared the audiences in St. Joan and Billy Budd during specific scenes. He referred first to Scene IV of St. Joan during which the principals philosophized for forty-five minutes and always "lost the student audiences" and then, the trial scene in Act II of Billy Budd which "completely absorbed the student audiences." He then said that the audiences "had come quite a long trip in between." Referring to the increased involvement of the students in the recent experimental productions, he added quickly, "We are giving them more and they are giving us back more."

When asked for specific instances of student reactions, seven of the actors referred to the production of Billy Budd at least once. An actor spoke of "the great rapport with the young Billy Budd" which he felt to exist. However, he said that there was little time to verbalize during the show because "Adrian kept them [the students] so busy with so much action that they were participating more intensely than usual." Another actor remarked about Billy Budd that the students were "with him all the way" and that this production "so geared to the students" containing such "clarity and action" was for him, as an actor, the most significant production, too. One actress chose Billy Budd, "so imaginative and dramatic," as the most significant show staged. She felt that the boys and girls identified with the cast differently, with the girls relating to Billy as an adolescent believing in something, but "dreamy" and the boys relating even more to what he stood for and his predicament of being "drafted on ship." Another actor praised Billy Budd, pointing to the "great attention" and "strong relating" to it by the students.

Several actors mentioned the impact they felt Enemy of the People had made on the students. They cited the great response to Dr. Stockmann, a man against society, during and at the end of so many performances and recounted the booing and cheering with which the clear-cut characters of villain and hero were often greeted. Two actors mentioned Ah, Wilderness as a popular choice and said they found the students identifying with Richard, the adolescent hero of the play. A single actor recalled that although The Three Sisters was "cerebral and too intellectual for the students" he was amazed at how many of them reacted so strongly to the grasping sister, Natasha, that "they hollered at her!"

Several members of the company praised the productions of Julius Caesar from the second season, and Macbeth from the third season as especially significant. They thought these shows both were milestone departures from past productions. Three actors remarked that the students liked the violence and excitement of Julius Caesar. One added that the audiences seemed to him to have been especially good for this s

Another actor, illustrating how alert and well prepared the student audiences often were, recounted the following story as an example of student reaction to Julius Caesar. He said that in the first scene of the last act Cassius says before the battle that "This is my birthday; as this very day was Cassius born." Later, as Cassius, to escape capture, fell upon his sword, a male voice from the back of the audience yelled out, "Happy Birthday!"

Macbeth was termed "significant" by a number of the interviewees. One said the production was important for its further development of audience involvement through the extension of the action out into the auditorium. He also pointed to the exciting use of the supernatural in the production. Another termed this new approach "a really remarkable experience for the kids." Still another said the production marked a real turning point in the work of the company and the end of ordinary, professional productions. "We can't go back to drawing room comedy for the high school audiences, or the adults either, for that matter." He could not decide which of the last two productions, Macbeth or Billy Budd was the favorite of the students and decided it was a "toss-up" pointing out that the significant changes in these two productions had grown out of the Brother to Dragons experiment. Two members of the company stated their conviction that Brother to Dragon should have been one of the productions for the students.

The interviewees discussed the effects which they had perceived Project Discovery to have had on high school students in terms of a change in their activities or plans for a career. Five of them had specific examples of students' growth of interest in the theatre. The rest did not know high school students who had been so strongly influenced by the Project, and doubted that there was more than a superficial interest in it, for most of them. One actor commented very firmly that none of the Rhode Island youth should be encouraged to seek a career in the theatre, adding that the important outcomes of the Project for their futures should be the development of critical criteria to judge a theatre experience and the opportunity and impetus to continue to go! Another actor joined him, saying,

> The kids come backstage and say nice things to us but they don't seem to really absorb much of our lives. I don't think they should be encouraged to go into the business--it's overcrowded and the unemployment rate is so high. We've been lucky here.

Several other respondents had interesting examples of specific student interest in the theatre which had been generated by Project Discovery. One said he had gotten to know a number of the young people well through the Saturday workshops. He mentioned two girls who really should go into acting or directing as a career and many others who were seriously absorbed in the workshop training and who were becoming more active in dramatic activities back in their own high schools. Another said, "Yes, it's been interesting to watch the kids gravitate towards what they admire. Many of the students in the workshops think they want a theatre career now." Yet another member of the company mentioned that there were several former Rhode Island high school students who had attended Project Discovery productions who were now working with the company as members of the technical crew and one of them was acting in Billy Budd. This actor told of being informed by an admissions officer from Dartmouth that during interviews with Rhode Island boys, several of them had mentioned having been influenced by the Trinity Square Repertory Company and its productions.

Another example of the interest generated by Project Discovery was given by one of the actors who has been actively involved with students outside of the theatre. He explained that he was to be on the faculty of the state-wide summer school program called the Governor's school for the Gifted, which would be concerned with instruction in such arts as the theatre, dance, film, music, and writing. It had been set up partly because of the influence of Project Discovery, he was certain. He went on to point out that he had auditioned all the applicants for the theatre department, and found that they had each participated and been influenced by Project Discovery, were interested in a theatre career and wanted more stagecraft knowledge.

In discussing on-going or future educational theatre commitments the company voiced several opinions. They were in accord that the Repertory Company should administer any educational theatre program and "hold the reins firmly," as one of them put it. It was generally felt that more money should go into the productions themselves than towards the administering of an educational program.

Ideas for changes to make the students' theatre experience "more natural" were suggested and ranged from "less regimentation of the students" to "smaller audiences," and "a token charge for tickets," to "attending evening performances with adults outside of the school milieu." Several thought theatre going should not be compulsory as the poor audiences came from students who didn't want to be there. One actor said, however, that it should be compulsory at first for students to come to the theatre, for

> how can they know whether they like theatre or not if they've never experienced good professional theatre? They all should come, and then have the choice later.

Several felt that the experience should not be limited to the senior high school level, and should be offered, somehow, to junior high school students, too. One actor commented, "After all, it's not the Junior-Senior Prom, it's theatre!" There was some concern that the theatre company be introduced to the student community ahead of their involvement in the actual theatre experience, using personal interaction of members of the company with the students. It was suggested by one respondent that the Rhode Show could serve as an introduction for students before they come to the theatre. Play selection was pointed to as becoming increasingly important, with emphasis on the need to choose more experimental, contemporary plays. One actor said, "Too many plays are a lie to the kids in this day and age."

Finally, the actors seemed to share the desire to have later student performances. There was a general consensus that "the brain simply doesn't function well at 9:15 and neither actors nor audience should be asked to participate in a theatre performance at 9:15 a.m.!"

New Orleans

Do you see the goals in Repertory Company and the educational system as being in conflict?

I think practically speaking the things worked out pretty well. You can think up all sorts of reasons why it won't work. I mean one of the first things that critics of this plan must have said is, "My God, it can't work. You can't mix actors and teachers." But it has in fact worked. I think that's an answer to any list of incompatibilities.

One of the objectives you mentioned last year was the idea of bringing live theatre to students, making literature live and so forth.

I guess we always talk in terms of two goals, don't we? 1) Bringing the high school students from New Orleans together with live theatre and 2) establishing a resident professional theatre.

Right.

Now, that's a very general way of putting the goals, but now the question is which of those goals are being accomplished?

Yes.

Clearly we have been.... It is simply a mechanical matter that we have presented plays to the students. Obviously we've accomplished that because all of the students have always come for three years. There have been little interruptions but it has gone very well. Some of the kids in the program have by now seen 12 plays professionally produced. Whether we made ourselves a part of the community as an artistic entity remains to be seen, of course. That's a more difficult thing and there may be more to say about that on some of the other questions.

When you say "remains to be seen" you mean that so far the theatre has had the support of federal funds and so forth and therefore it's hard to see whether the theatre can survive on its own?

That's precisely what I mean. We've had a very good public, an increasing public, but not enough of a public yet to support the theatre by itself. We're supported mainly by our school program.

O.K. then, the next question was, do you see the goals of the Repertory Company and that of the educational system as having been in conflict?

Yeah, I think there's a certain basic kind of difference in the operations. Let me explain what I mean by that, and maybe I can kind of assess what I think has happened here. The theatre, like any other art, is not a useful thing, it's play, professionalized play. It's not particularly useful, it's not meant to be, and when people try to make it useful like the Chinese Communist make a propaganda device out of their theatre or as in Nazi Germany the theatre was made into a sort of tool of the political system. When you try to make art useful you undercut its very nature. Its essence and the thing that's good about it which is that it's an expression of the play instincts of people and, as a consequence, it brings out our deepest feelings about ourselves and it helps us to see ourselves in the deepest and most complete ways. Educators, however, I guess necessarily, try to see materials that they present to their students in a more utilitarian way, they want things to be useful. Of course there's still a great liberal arts tradition but somehow we've gotten the notion of going to school as a useful thing, it helps you get ahead in life. It helps you get to college and going to college helps you to make more money. What is more, there is in America a strong strain of Puritanism which means that things that aren't useful, like art, are probably immoral. You know this feeling still endures in this country. The notion that the federal government ought to give money to actors still is a scandal to many people. So you have a situation where not only is the federal government giving money to actors, basically, and basically this project is about the hiring of live actors to do something useless like theatre, and this suddenly plops down in the curriculum of an educational institution. It's a very curious kind of arrangement and of course there's always the tendency on the part of the schools to want to make the theatre somehow function in other ways, as an adjunct to literary studies for one thing and somehow as a teaching device. I'm sorry, I'm not too specific about that but there's a natural tug of war between the artist who wants to be free to play and the teacher who wants to make people come in from playground and sit down. Do you see what I mean? Is that too theoretical....

No, I think that's very good. Let's get concrete about this being in conflict when it comes to kids coming to see the play. What kind of differences does it make that the schools want to make something useful out of the experience?

I don't think it makes that much difference. Maybe my considerations are just theoretical. I think the kids come to the theatre and I think they have a marvelous time. Ultimately the mood of play predominates. This is something they do to have a good time. I think then they're getting the essence of what is great about the theatre, and what is marvelously humane. I do think that this makes some people uneasy, this makes some teachers uneasy. And I know it has made whole schools uneasy here because that's just what children do not go to school to do. They come to school to work and to be serious about life, not to play.

Do you feel that the schools have any right or that there's any place in education just to have the students exposed to this organized play?

You see now I have to speak as a layman, before I was speaking as a theatre person. Now I'm not a professional educator, I'm a parent and a citizen. And as a parent and a citizen I think its extremely important that students be exposed to artistic experiences. And be exposed to them without excuses, without having to excuse the experience as being somehow in some other way leading to some other kind of superior and more useful and more worthwhile kind of benefit. I think the arts are good in and of themselves, period. They need to have no other reason for being themselves and I would love to see that kind of attitude fostered in the schools. I think this program may have gone a long way toward doing that.

So, in other words, you would say it's worked in spite of the fact that many educators have tried to make the plays useful?

And naturally they have, that's their instinct. I think by and large the students that have seen these plays have taken them with the kind of freedom of mind and spirit that should happen in the theatre. I think they've taken it the right way. By entertainment we needn't just mean sort of passing the time as the kids do on Saturday morning when they watch the cartoons on television. That's not to me complete entertainment because it just engages a very small part of the total person.

You would say that the schools could have very little effect on engaging more of the sensibilities of the student?

I don't know. I'm not in the classroom, it's very hard for me and I'm just guessing. I only see these kids when they come into the theatre. Can you return me to your original question a little bit? I feel like I'm slipping around the point here. I have a feeling I've evaded it somewhat.

The original question was: Are the two in conflict? Are the educational goals and the theatrical in conflict?

Yes, they are. But the conflict in that case isn't necessarily unproductive. I think reasonable conflict or tension can have productive results. I think what we've fallen into here, alas, as a theatre, is a loss of our identity as a theatre, as an artistic group, because of the predominance of these student matinees in our schedule, five out of eight, and the shaping of our whole season toward a sort of curriculum. And you see this is where the trouble comes. I think maybe this comes down to it. The theatre must be itself and offer itself to its audience, whether its a student audience or a school audience; but it mustn't be formed or shaped in policy by an educational institution or it becomes adulterated. I think a little bit of that has happened in this project. The picking of a season to fit needs of teachers of literature is not a good idea because it compromises the theatre which is an independent art in itself. We have tended to see our seasons in terms of what I suppose we thought were school book plays. I think that's a mistake. The censorship of plays--we had one of our plays censored by the school board, which I think is scandalous. It's sort of shameful that we should be compromised in that way. I don't think this is anybody's fault particularly, but I think that one thing that I have learned is that theatre must remain itself in order to be useful to anybody, schools or public or whatever, and the minute it starts becoming a tool of some other kind of direction then it has problems.

How would you describe the behavior of the students in the theatre? Have you observed any changes in their behavior over the past three years? Can you think of any notable examples of audience reactions which took place? Let's take them one at a time.

I think I may have said this before. I think maybe Stuart has made this observation, its something that we're all conscious of, and that is that any audience which is a specialized audience--like a group of teachers, lawyers, or a benefit house, or a theatre party or a group of students--anybody that comes with their own prior coherence, their own prior sense of community, their own prior identity, behave differently in the theatre. Rather than being made into a community or into a mob or into a cohesive body by the play they've already made themselves into something solid. So their behavior then tends to outweigh what's going on on the stage. I remember when I went to see a preview of a show in New York that the Actor's Studio had produced. Cheryl Crawford, the producer, came out beforehand and this was an invited audience of theatre people and she was very tough with us. She said now you've all been invited here, you've been given free tickets and I want you to pay attention to the play and not gabble among yourselves and pretend that you're at a party. You're at a theatre. I thought that was very interesting because she was trying to break down the group feeling and make us yield ourselves as individuals to the experience on the stage so that what was created in the auditorium and the stage was a new sense or a group feeling and that's what happens when a production is good. So it's inevitable then if you get 1500 students who are all from the same school and to segregate them by sex or by race or by grade or by class or however they're arranged in the theatre that they are going to be a tough audience in a sense that they have an identity already and that means that the individuals in that group and how they relate to the people that they're with. So that its harder, often, to get them to accept the life on the stage as a consequence. I think that's the outstanding characteristic of the behavior of these audiences. I think it would be interesting if some day if a student theatre program could be so designed that the students could attend in a more heterogenous group. I think the students who come to the theatre here in the evening with the adults and especially to a play like Enemy of the People learn a lot more about the play and about themselves and experience more of the play as a consequence of being with a broader group. We all learn from one another a theatre audience, too. You see what I mean?

How about the changes in their behavior? Accepting that they are a different kind of audience has the behavior changed in any significant ways over the past three years?

The first two years I was in the theatre for every show all the time. This season I haven't been in the theatre as much but I have observed a lot of students this year as well as the last two. It seems to me that they're more hip to what is going on but they have to learn to concentrate more on the stage but I think they are sensitive to the fact that it is live and electronic. Now I couldn't document that in any way, it's just a hunch.

Imagine the clock has been turned back three years and the plays of the project are just being announced. If you were asked for suggestions about how the plans should be revised, assuming that they were announced the way they are here, so that the project would run smoothly and effectively and have the greatest benefit for the student what kind of suggestions would you make?

I guess I would have suggested that there be some way for the company, the theatre, to get its feet on the ground artistically before the impact of 42,000 kids is imposed on it. That would be a great help. Either more plays in the season or some arrangement whereby the broader audience could be developed first, in order to give the company its identity, so that in the face of these audiences it could maintain a strong identity and a strong artistic purpose. That's on the theatrical side. On the educational side, I think that the emphasis on dramatic literature as the curricular correspondent of the project was not a happy one. I think from the beginning we should focus our attention on the theatre and on actors and on plays. But I think the view that is taken of the theatre as a kind of adjunct of dramatic literature is an awkward one, a clumsy one.

It's been suggested that maybe the plays should not be handled by English teachers, not necessarily by drama teachers either. Some materials about theatre experience or something.

That's an interesting notion. Because you see while English teachers, some of them, understand drama as a literary form, most of them I think are more at home with prose, and poetry and the novel and short story and essay and this kind of reading and writing, so that really what we have as an audience is a constituency of people pretty much at the same level in so far as the theatrical experience goes. Student and teacher are alike in so far as the whole experience of theatre-going goes. Maybe what you need is just first a season of theatre-going without any curricular activities at all and then some kind of a conference, some kind of an assessment after that, about the impact and then where to go from there. So that the theatre experience is unique in itself.

What do you think about a compulsory nature of the project? Would you endorse that?

Yeah, I think you sort of have to make some rules, don't you? I mean kids that age are likely to be frivolous. Wouldn't it have been interesting at some point along the way to have found out what would have happened in a voluntary situation where the kids would volunteer for this experience after having made it compulsory for one year? I think that would have been quite interesting to see what kids would come. Another way of doing it would have been perhaps to reduce the number of student performances and specialized it to some degree, I don't know how you'd pick the students who would come, I guess just on a volunteer basis. I wouldn't like to see a project for only students who get high grades, for instance.

Again I'm sort of introducing some of my own biases, but I think public education is just great, that's why I'm involved in it. But I do think that one of the things that happens when people get something free is that they don't value it and I wonder if, in some way or other, the students were asked to cough up even 25¢, do you think that would have any merit toward it?

Yes, I think it would have a lot of merit toward it. They should learn sooner or later that they do have to start paying to go. Yeah, I think that one could subsidize the student audience. One wouldn't want to shut out those kids who couldn't raise a quarter. There are kids who couldn't raise a quarter. We're told that people this age in our country have an enormous spending power and this statistians tell us. Then making it a little more commercial that way would take it even further out of the realm of instruction and curriculum, would then make the experience more playlike and less academic.

What about the theatre people, the actors, the directors, and so forth, and their relationship to the school? I was just talking to Stuart and he said that he felt that the schools had missed a bet in not making good use of the professional people that were in the community. Do you have any ideas, if the project were to start over again, of what kinds of use the schools might make without completely draining the time of the professional people?

I'm not sure. We did do a certain amount of guest shots and going around to schools and this kind of thing. Actors are pretty busy and I really don't know of any sort of formal means by which the schools can avail themselves of the actors.

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Late in the spring of 1969 eight interviews were conducted with members of Repertory Theatre, New Orleans. These interviews were planned to obtain statements of opinion concerning the accomplishments and failures of the Project as it neared the end of its third year.

The criteria used in determining which members of the repertory company would be interviewed were availability and duration of their participation in the Project. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. A general content analysis was then made of each interview. The same questions were asked of each interviewee, and covered the following topics:

1. The reasons for the establishment of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project; those goals being accomplished; those goals of the Repertory Company and the school systems seen to be in conflict;

2. Actor participation in in-school services; types of services; value of services;

3. General student behavior in the theatre; changes over three years; specific observable reactions over three years;

4. Actors' opinions concerning the significance of the productions for the students;

5. Specific examples of students who have been sufficiently influenced by the Project to change their activities or plans for a career;

6. Suggestions from repertory company members for future educational theatre involvements, based on their experience with the project.

Members of Repertory Theatre, New Orleans centered their discussion of the Eucational Laboratory Theatre Project's goals, accomplishments, and conflicts around two specific topics: (1) The establishing of a resident professional theatre where none had previously existed; (2) The exposure of New Orleans' high school students to live classic theatre, thereby broadening their educations and their lives.

The majority of the respondents felt that the goal of exposing large numbers of students to professional, live theatre had certainly been achieved. They pointed to the experience as a valuable human one which most of the high school students might never have had. Praise for its value ranged from "It showed the kids that the English language is a living language--that dramatic literature is alive" to "It has given the students a picture of the world as it was yesterday, and, as it is today, and has created in them an audience for the future." One actress stated specifically that she felt the Negro schools, and other lower-class schools, had benefitted most from the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project and that it had "enriched their lives" especially.

There was a great deal of concern expressed, however, for the future of the theatre company itself. The achievement of the goal of permanently establishing the theatre in New Orleans was questioned by five out of the eight respondents. Looking back on the three years of the Project, one actor said that in terms of simple mechanics--presenting plays to all the students for three years--the project had been a success, but that the future of the company in New Orleans remained to be seen. He questioned whether the company had made itself a part of the community as an artistic entity. He concluded "We've had a very good public, an increasing public, but not enough of a public yet to support the theatre by itself. We've been supported mainly by our school program." It was clearly expressed by other members of the company that the necessity for more support from the community and for more time for the company to strengthen its roots there was of the utmost importance to their survival.

The discussions held with the actors concerning the conflicting interests of the Repertory Company and the educational system touched on many points. Six out of eight persons questioned felt that conflicts had existed and referred to specific situations which they had encountered during the Project. One actor pointed out that for a theatre company to be involved with a public school system was not necessarily in the best interest of theatre and that it inevitably led to misunderstandings. He stated that the choice of plays that could be produced and the manner of their production were limited by the involvement with education. At the same time he defended the ability of today's high school students to accept life as it is ("The kids are far less shockable and obsessed by things than their parents") and the importance of their being exposed to any play of "content" without its being censored by educators. One actress expressed reservations about "Whether professional theatre and education can be wed" and pointed to "The blatant censoring of plays by the educational system." She went on to say that the committment to education had dulled the theatre's image in the community and that, at that point in the Project, the school systems were indifferent to the fate of the Repertory Company. Four other members of the company mentioned the instances of play censoring by the school system and allowed that this had added to their reservations concerning successful theatre-education ventures in the future. One of them put it: "We had one of our plays this spring censored by the school board, which I think is scandalous, and sort of shameful that we should be compromised in that way." Another, in reference to this same incident which came late in the third season of the Project, lamented the great communication failure between the schools and the theatre. "How little we've gotten together and understood each other." She added that the gap between the theatre company and the educational system had widened because the schools continued to persist in thinking that the plays presented to the students had to be "acceptable" literature and were not valuable "simply in themselves." "And, then they have to be presented in a certain way, with identifiable educational materials and methods of instruction attached."

Four out of eight of those interviewed expressed criticism of the "educational" money spent to prepare the high school students for all the theatre productions. They questioned the need for the students to be prepared for the shows with curriculum materials and copies of the plays. One actress objected to what she perceived as the schools' "overteaching," at the same time stating that she felt "The overteaching was done on a very superficial level." Three actors objected specifically to the special touring show conducted in the spring to prepare the students for the Ionesco one-act plays in the spring. One said that "There was great misunderstanding here as to what constituted a valuable educational experience for the students." The attitude of other members of the repertory company appeared to be that the experience in the theatre itself was sufficient, especially for that production. One member, questioning the money spent on the touring show to prepare students for Ionesco, said "Why, they [the students] understand the theatre of the absurd much better than the adults! It's life--it's what's happening right now--the silliness of the moment!"

Reaction to the value of the additional in-school services which the actors had participated in was varied. Six of the eight members of the company interviewed had participated in a number of the activities. They included: (1) assembly or classroom participation, (2) seminars or workshops, (3) press conferences and (4) touring scenes from the productions "Conscience in Conflict," "The Ed and Anne Show," etc. Of these participants, only two of them seriously questioned the value these activities had had for the high school students. One of these commented that he felt the activities were carried out mainly to serve the schools' ends. Four of the others commented on the pleasure their experiences in the schools had given them, but were in agreement that it was an increasing burden on their time with performance and rehearsal schedules so tight. Several actors commented on the mutual benefits of this experience. One said that it reinforced his understanding of his own ideas and helped him, too, to understand more fully the role of the teacher in the classroom. Another explained the value of these in-school services saying:

> The school visits have been rather truncated necessarily by time and money, but were of great value to the students. I think the students' consciousness was expanded by the presence of live actors in the schools. Their concentration on the actors in the theatre was heightened as a result of knowing them, in the schools, too.

One actress said that the kids learn that the actors are real people and she felt it gave them a much greater awareness of the theatre as work and as an art form. Another actress reflected that perhaps there could have been more effort made in the area of "conditioning" the students about their role as an audience, discussing the necessary actor-audience relationship which is so different from that expected from students watching television or movies. She added that this would have been more valuable than the play reading and the other kinds of preparation for the experience.

The actors and actresses questioned were lively in their remarks about student behavior in the theatre. Five of the interviewees felt that the high school audiences had changed as their experience with live theatre increased. The other three were in some doubt as to whether the audiences had really grown in their response to the productions.

Discussing possible improved student theatre behavior one actress said, "I suppose they've gotten better, but since each year approximately one-third of the audience is new and hasn't been exposed to theatre before, it's difficult to tell. She said that there is an "openness" to the experience there in the students when they came to the theatre, and that many schools are able to be quiet and listen. She added, however, that after three years the same surface noises are there--the shuffling of feet, popping of gum, etc.--making it difficult for the actors to project successfully a good deal of the time. One actor said, "The students are more hip to what's going on, but they still need to concentrate on the stage more." Another: "They're more sophisticated in what they react to, with fewer inappropriate responses," and a third: "Their attention span is better; the questions they ask us are much better, too." Several members of the company were in agreement that in general the high-schoolers listened better and responded more openly when in the theatre. One actress felt the students had learned to listen better to Shakespeare in particular. She said, as well, "The students' theatre manners have come along, just through being there and by accomodating each other better."

The actress who had said that the Negro and lower class schools had progressed as audiences, stated that throughout the three years of the Project several affluent public and private schools remained notorious for their "consistent rotten behavior" in the theatre and "They neither listened nor cared."

And one actress said that the behavior of the student audiences had not changed as much as that of the members of the company. She said:

> The company has been changed and influenced by the high school audiences through such steady involvement with them. We have been led along by them and have found ourselves playing to them for laughs all this year. We catch ourselves literally saying 'look here', or 'listen to this'. So I don't think so steady an educational theatre diet is healthy."

Commenting on the constant reactions of the boys and girls to anything "the slightest off-color or sexy" another member of the company said that the prevalence of so much reaction of this nature pointed to the need for better sex education in the schools.

An actor pointed to the fact that "The kids break up over any comic business to a ridiculous extent and sometimes stop the show. It's sometimes difficult to get them to sustain their attention from point to point."

Each one of the eight interviewees had definite opinions about the many audiences which had been segregated by sex throughout the three seasons. They were unanimous in their belief that mixed (boy-girl) audiences were infinitely more natural, better audiences. Of the audiences segregated by sex one said, "The boys are raucous and raunchy, the girls are silly and nervous," another, "They're definitely grandstanding for each other," and a third, "They're hyper-sensitive to each other with ribald by-play taking place between them at a distance." One actor termed it "sociologically absurd." An actress went even further to say "The high school theatre audiences are segregated by sex, by color, and by income bracket as well! It's absolutely stupid and every possible way of creating or reinforcing misunderstanding between people is being utilized in that situation."

When questioned as to specific reactions of the students which they could recall, several cautioned that it was sometimes difficult to determine whether applause, rhythmic clapping, and standing ovations were direct appreciation or response to the play or whether it represented school tradition or another form of "pre-conditioning."

Several laughingly recalled a performance of Romeo and Juliet during the first season when students threw spitballs on the stage and caused the performance to be cancelled half way through. They went on to say that later the school attending that day became one of their best audiences. An actor recounted that one especially good audience caught his attention for Twelfth Night. The students seemed to catch every bit of humor in the play, even the most subtle innuendos. He commented that to be so sharp they must have been well prepared in their classrooms.

There were several references to the Crucible as a play which brought strong and moving reactions from the students. Three of the actors pointed to Ionesco's "Bald Soprano" as reaching the student audiences much more effectively than the adult ones. An actor said "They love the farce and madness of this." One actress quoted a high school boy as telling her that it was a very funny and authentic comment on life in America today.

Six members of the acting company commented on the popularity which they thought the Shakespeare productions had each season. Four of these respondents thought that these productions had been the most widely accepted and the most significant for the students. They were certain that students displayed an increased understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare as the Project progressed.

Two actors felt that the students were much more receptive to comedy than to any other form of drama. They both named Charley's Aunt as the standout production for the students with Arms and the Man and "The Bald Soprano" following it in that order. Several others mentioned that the plays involving an individual or a group against the establishment had tremendous appeal for the students and cited The Crucible, St. Joan, and Enemy of the People as having been favorites. There was a general disinclination among the actors to be absolute in their opinions of which plays had had the most impact for the high school youngsters. Several mentioned that they didn't feel qualified to make judgements of this nature, and one quickly added that his ideas about which plays had been the kids' favorites would probably be his own favorites.

When questioned whether they knew any student whose activities or plans for a career had been changed by the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, five of the interviewees answered the question affirmatively and three answered it negatively.

Three of them talked of specific girls who were involved with Repertory Theatre in one way or another as ushers or members of Teens 'N Theatre and seem inspired to take up theatre careers. One actress said she was helping a senior girl who wants to be an actress, but that she would discourage her as much as possible since it is such a rough profession to break into. An actor recalled two boys from an archdiocesan school who have gone into drama activities there as a result of the Project. He mentioned that one recent New Orleans high school graduate was now with the Barter Theatre in Virginia.

In looking back over the three seasons of the Project, repertory company members had a number of ideas about future educational theatre programs. Most of them mentioned that theatre attendance should not be compulsory for the high school students. One did say that perhaps attendance should be compulsory one year, followed by a voluntary year as it would be an interesting way to see who came back. Another advocated a nominal ticket charge. Five discussed the idea of students seeing the plays in a more dignified way, eliminating the "herding by group." It was strongly suggested that a better seating arrangement be considered with no segregation by color, sex, or school. Use of tickets, ushers, and student attendance at evening performances with adults were all discussed.

Plays with more relevance for today's generation of television watchers and movie goers were suggested. Also mentioned were more experimentation with the graphic arts, fuller use of music, and more involvement of the students themselves.

Above all else the company members felt that the resident theatre itself should be well established before any educational committment was undertaken. One actor said that it was important and essential for a theatre company to be able to maintain a strong identity and a strong artistic purpose in the face of all its audiences. It was generallly felt that the theatre company should have the authority to set up and administer any educational program it undertook. Two of the actors were concerned that their company was not integrated, and pointed to the importance of this in the future. An actress exclaimed, "We've been telling the students, it's a white world!"

Four actors pointed to the adverse effects of there being so many student performances each week and at such an early morning hour. It was agreed that no early performances had the quality of those performed later in the day. One actor speculated that in a future educational theatre experiment the first season should be "pure theatre--going with no curricular activities or preparation--with the theatre experience being unique." He said that, then, at the end of this season, evaluation should be made of this type of educational theatre before another season was planned.

Part Six

summary statements from some of the principal figures in the project

SUMMARY STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPAL FIGURES IN THE EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY THEATRE PROJECT

Early in 1969, Mrs. Mary Barksdale of the CEMREL staff wrote to the artistic directors and the educational coordinators in Rhode Island and New Orleans, asking that each of them make the attempt to summarize and evaluate the the three year experience of the Project that was then drawing to a close. Lengthy statements were received from three of these people, and they are reprinted below. In early 1970, Mrs. Barksdale made the same request of some 35 people who had been involved in the planning of the Project or in the operation of it or who had taken a professional interest in it. About half of the people addressed did not reply. Some of those who did reply asked that their opinions not be made part of the public record, or stated that their opinions were already in print, or explained that they were at work on articles on the Project and did not wish to steal their own thunder. Follow-up letters and phone calls increased the number of statements only slightly, although they made clear that the major reason for the lack of response to the original communication was simply the pressure of work--since without exception the people we had approached were busy people with heavy responsibilities. The statements which we received, therefore, do not represent a balanced cross-section of the opinions of the principal participants in the Project. Those which we received and were given permission to reprint, are printed below in chronological order, as they were received and without editorial comment.

NOTE: Mr. Junius Eddy, who was the Coordinator of the ELT Project for the U. S. Office of Education from 1966 to 1969, contributed a lengthy statement upon ESEA-backed performance programs in general, and upon the ELT Project in particular. His statement will be found, rather than in this section, in an Appendix to Volume Four of this report, "Professional Theatres and the Schools."

March 28, 1969

Mrs. Mary Louise Barksdale
Central Midwestern Regional
Educational Laboratory, Inc.
10646 St. Charles Rock Road
St. Ann, Missouri - 63074

Dear Mary Louise:

I know I received a letter from you asking me for some conclusions about the project now that we are in the final year. I can't find the letter, but I remember you said something about my remarks remaining anonymous if I desired. On the contrary, I hope that you will identify me clearly, but please use the following material in its entirety if at all, for these are matters about which I feel quite strongly.

SOME CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THREE YEARS OF THE EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY THEATRE

A resident professional theatre has been founded where none existed before. Its admission paying public has grown in size and in the quality of its appreciation. Each year an audience of 42,000 high school students has had a chance to see high level performances of great plays. All this has been accomplished with commendable smoothness by both the professional theatre people and the educators involved. Only an occasional ripple has marred the surface, and the deeper tensions and problems have not disrupted the relationship with either our student or adult audiences. Uniquely, all this has been accomplished with the aid of government funding. New Orleans is the first professional theatre actually funded with government funds since the W.P.A. Federal Theatre of the 1930's, which was a relief project and in no sense represented a government commitment to arts support. Nothing which I say later in these comments is intended to negate the accomplishment of three completed seasons. The professional problems have been severe; the educational innovations have been unsettling; and the pooling of government funds from several sources has required special tact and manipulation. Our greatest advocate and most staunch supporter has been Mr. Roger Stevens, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, and though the Office of Education people and the Orleans Parish School Board people have continued to work steadily for this project's goals, without Mr. Stevens I am sure everything would have long since stopped.

I, for one, have learned a lot in three years. I shall try to summarize as best I can.

From my three year experience here, I am forced to conclude that it is quite improper to set up a theatre whose major purpose is to serve the educational needs of a particular school system. The nature of both theatres and school systems keeps this arrangement from being satisfactory. A theatre is not simply a tool for the mounting of theatrical performances, but an organic artistic entity with an important life as an institution. It must be free to respond to the artistic needs of its creative leaders, its actors, its designers, its audiences. A theatre can perform an educational function, but only if the school system is willing to relate its programs to what the theatre is doing - - in other words theatre can be the initiator. A school system is a bureaucracy. It has political responsibilities within the community. It has tasks of keeping discipline and order which are not in the highest sense educational nor in any sense related to a theatre's purpose. A school system is not free to sponsor all activities which it knows to be worthwhile, particularly in the theatrical area. For example, any educator would admit that Tennessee Williams is an important writer and that STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE is a great play, but that play belongs, with many plays, in an area of subject matter which the school system can commend but cannot compulsorily include.

Our student audiences have not been seeing plays under the best conditions. After all, most plays worth doing have been written by middle-aged adults for consumption by middle-aged, middle-class audiences. When students attend a play surrounded only by students, the audience response creates an emphasis which no author could have intended. I don't mean it is always a bad response; I just mean it is a peculiar response. Plays are not written to be heard by audiences composed of only men, or only doctors, or only girls, or only high school students.

Much if not all of what has been done in school to prepare students for plays has been damaging, I feel, to the excitement and first-time experience of the theatre. The very necessity of attending is false. Going to the theatre should be a matter of choice. Reading a play ahead of time is false; all authors expected their audiences to be experiencing their version of the story for the first time. Few teachers are qualified to excite and lead classes in appreciation for plays, and a pedantic conversion of plot and construction into test material certainly does no good. We have also found that teachers have created improper expectations. In connection with our current production, ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE, it is easy to see that some teachers have not understood the comedy inherent in Ibsen's original play and in David Scanlan's version. I know that it takes longer to awaken the students to what we are actually doing on the stage than if they had had no preparation at all. I object, as well, to the money spent in this project on buttons saying "Who is the Bald Soprano?" and on printing colorful teaching materials. At the moment a $10,000 "pilot project" is being contemplated by the educational end of this program, in which community actors will be sent around to play school assemblies with a bad little script purporting to lay the groundwork for the viewing of our Ionesco double bill. This is particularly painful at a time when the operating funds of the theatre were cut by Washington fiat after we had already made contractual commitments. In other words, the theatre management or the community, or somebody, is supposed to make up a $25,000 deficit out of somewhere in order that high school students can see plays, while $10,000 is being spent by the educational end of things to do an assembly project which appears to me to be of nebulous concept and value. But this lack of regard for the health and well being of the producing arm of the project has been typical of our relations here.

Part of the problem has come from the fact that the operation of a major American theatre has required personnel of quite high caliber. The organization of the school system has caused the director of the theatre to be equated in terms of communicating processes with the recently promoted high school teacher who is Project Supervisor for the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. A proper alignment might have been for the director of the theatre to have dealings with the superintendent of schools, who is an able gentleman of first rate capacity. None of his subordinates, and the Project Supervisor is quite low on their scale of precedence, are really capable of handling the educational artistic and administrative questions which have arisen over and over again in this project. This desparity of level has, I believe, caused most of the unpleasantness which has occurred. It all goes back to my earlier premise that a theatre is an organism with its own dimensions and autonomy, and an organism which is infinitely more complex and difficult than a school system. When a professional theatre is made part of a university, for example, there is sooner or later a rupture because a theatre can't be part of another institution any more than a mouse can be part of an elephant, unless, of course, the elephant eats the mouse.

The artistic limitations of this project, beyond the communication difficulties, have been severe. It has been a destructive drain on our artistic caliber to play the same play for students and adults in the same week. Try as we will, the student audiences inevitably force upon us a heightening of obvious values along with overplaying and tension, due to our need both to explain the play and to hold attention. It is my opinion that the prolonged pre-season student performances at Stratford, Connecticut have ruined the artistic caliber of that institution. Although our productions are not as undermined as they could be if we played them for two solid months to nothing but students, we do suffer.

Plays which the school system can afford to sponsor and plays which belong in a high school curriculum are not plays of compelling general audience appeal. An initial part of the structure of this theatre was that the same plays had to be performed for both audiences. That was all the money there was, and all the time, too. While we have offered respectively interesting seasons, they have lacked the spice of the daring and the new which would have helped ticket sales. This would not be important if the student performances were paying their own way. They have never done so. In fact, the adult admissions have been very necessary to keep the theatre open. Yet the school authorities have given only grudging lip service to our need for salable seasons.

Five-eighths of our weekly energies are devoted to serving student audiences. It would seem that five-eighths of our total income should then be derived from the student audiences. It has never been so. This is an inequity which ought never be perpetrated again.

Every year costs have gone up. Rental has gone up, materials for scene construction and costume construction have risen in price, and the artistic continuity necessary to develop a theatre ensemble has meant salary raises as people have stayed on for succeeding seasons. Yet there has been a decrease in the money provided for each succeeding season. It is as if the reward for doing effective work was a cutback in funds. Particularly in the case of the National Endowment for the Arts money this has been a severe hardship. Everyone connected with the project had understood, though perhaps it had never been put down in writing, that we were to be funded by the National Endowment for the Arts at $165,000 for each of three years. Only at the end of our first season did we discover that this was not to be the case. I have never complained aloud about this, but I always felt that the ground rules were changed on us in midstream.

The initial three year timetable was, in my opinion, too short. Perhaps five years would have been a more realistic time. Certainly no theatre in the United States has been able to develop a genuine identity in a three year period.

At least one of the goals of this project was to establish an on-going professional theatre for New Orleans. At present writing we are in the process of once again reorganizing our Board of Directors, in the hope that the energy can be found to raise money for the future. The future looks brighter to me in one respect at least. We will no longer have to cope with massive school involvement. Since we will not know until midsummer what the possible involvement of the various schools will be, due to changes in funding procedures, Repertory Theatre, New Orleans, is planning fall and spring seasons independent of student attendance. The student performances will be contained entirely in the two month period, January-February, 1970. For the first time we will be able to devise a season of plays which represents us artistically. For the first time we can contemplate moving to a rotating policy, a policy of scheduling much more viable artistically. For the first time we are able to consider only the proper tasks of a theatre, without being dragged down by second-rate minds hopelessly entangled in false notions about theatre and theatre education.

My involvement with secondary education during this three year period has reversed my attitude toward the public schools. This is a personal note but perhaps it expresses the depth of my feeling. I could not, in good conscience, submit a child of mine to the kind of teaching which I have seen in operation during my three years with this project. I am a product of public education in Indiana. Looking back I feel lucky to have gotten through with half a mind. When, at every performance, 20 to 40 teachers spend the time smoking in the arcade, I wonder that these students emerge with any training at all. The Project Supervisor for the Orleans Parish School System has been largely concerned with evoking girlish enthusiasm and preparing things which will give her a good scrapbook. She is, I hasten to say, the best of the lot. It is little wonder that I note no improvement in audience responses between the first year of this project and the third, since none of the local people have understood what the great potential of this project was. Student audience response has never been bad; and it probably is true that the bad teaching is so bad it simply makes no impressions. Nevertheless I do not feel that a new generation of theatregoers has been built. The deadliness of the classroom teaching and the compulsory nature of attendance along with forced discussion and examination based on the plays, has for the majority of the students carefully leveled the theatre experience off so that it is safely compatible with the other nonsense which goes on in high school.

I could not recommend establishing further new theatres on this basis. I would strongly recommend, however, that Title III funds be used to purchase books of tickets to regular performances at existing theatres. These tickets could be distributed to those students who want to go, who would then attend, not with their peers, but with adults, thus learning to participate in what is essentially an adult activity. Theatre is first of all entertainment, but it is the highest type of entertainment, in that it enriches our life experience through vicarious involvement. This kind of involvement is all but objectified out of existence for the student audiences in the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. I am astounded at the resilience of those student minds which can still find our theatre exciting in some measure. Theatre attendance, subsidized by government funds, but of a voluntary nature on the part of the students, would insure access to the art for those who can get something out of it and bring something to it.

Both Repertory Theatre and the school system now face a transitional time. It is apparent that federal funds in past amounts will no longer be forthcoming. Nevertheless, there remain available funds under Title III for attendance at performances. Much as I would like to see the kind of voluntary program initiated which I suggest above, I think we should continue within the existing framework to retain the school system's interest in building theatre appreciation. Our plans for next season, based on some of the observations noted above, entails mounting fall and spring seasons for adult audiences, and placing our student performance within a controlled period of the year - possibly the months of January and February. During this time, the theatre would perform only for students, and the school systems involved could select performances from our existing roster of plays, or with sufficient prior notice they could ask for particular plays they might want to see. This arrangement has the advantage for us of breaking the connection between the educational and the adult performances. I believe we will be able to do each task better as a result.

It is our hope that students introduced to theatre through this project will become members of our regular theatre audience in future years. Everything we can do to make the theatre more exciting and compelling for them will help us achieve that goal. It is in this spirit that we make our plans for the fall season, and it is in this spirit that I have gone into my reservations about things as they have been done in this project in the past.

Sincerely,

Stuart Vaughan

SV:rb

The
TRINITY
SQUARE
REPERTORY
COMPANY

May 8, 1969

Mrs. Mary Louise Barksdale
Central Midwestern Regional
Educational Laboratory, Inc.
10646 St. Charles Rock Road
St. Ann, Missouri 63074

Dear Weezie,

I am extremely pessimistic about any kind of objective observation of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project being of value to anyone on the opposite end of the telescope. So I ask you to regard this as my own personal point of view, very prejudiced, and in no way intended to be a guide for future projects. Or indeed not intended to reflect harshly on any of the dears who have made my life absolutely miserable in the last three years.

PROJECT DISCOVERY IS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM INVOLVING LARGE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS AND THE PERFORMING ARTS THAT HAS EVER BEEN UNDERTAKEN IN THIS COUNTRY.

The rather overwhelming success that this program has achieved is best reflected in the total acceptance by the educators and by the public. They just "luv" Project Discovery. One is forced to repeat things so frequently over a period of three years that they become accepted cliches. So, I will set down for the final time in my life (I hope) some of the accepted cliches and also will try to explore what is really behind them.

A THEATRE MUST BE ESTABLISHED WITH ITS OWN IDENTITY BEFORE IT CAN UNDERTAKE A PROGRAM SUCH AS THE EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY THEATRE PROJECT.

The establishment of a professional theatre in a hostile environment (any large city in these United States) is so staggeringly difficult that one can only address oneself to survival FIRST. Later on when the Natives have been given brightly colored beads and lots of wampum and fire juice one can begin to examine the possibilities of real grass root tie-ins; i.e. an educational program.

A theatre must be established (alive and well and living under its own steam) before it can begin to think of playing footsies with the local beauracracy (education).

Trinity had been a professional repertory company for two years before Roger Stevens and Kathryn Bloom held up our little pink bottom to the world and gave it such a whack; thereby demonstrating that exposure is very painful but that our lung power was potentially enormous.

EXPOSURE TO THE WORLD'S GREAT LITERATURE IS AT THE HEART OF THIS PROGRAM.

One thing that continually confuses and confounds everyone is just what the hell this "aesthetic experience" or performing arts experience is. What produces it? What are the necessary ingredients? If it is not the same thing as a literary experience, is it valid in education? (And for heaven's sake, how do we get a lid on it so that it doesn't erupt and spew over all the little virginal minds before EDUCATION has an opportunity to properly indoctrinate them with some weapons of defense?!) These questions have been raised many times.

There seems to be only one absolute that we can embrace. The theatre experience and the literary experience are not the same thing. Therefore, it is possible for the student to read a play 87 times and come to the theatre unprepared for the aesthetic experience.

IF THE BASIC PHILOSOPHIES OF EDUCATION AND THE THEATRE ARE AT WAR, THEN HOW CAN PERFORMING ARTS EVER BE INCLUDED IN THE EDUCATION CURRICULUM.

One thing we may conclude, absolute intercourse is not possible. Still, that isn't so frightening. The zebra and the lion don't mate, but it is possible for them to exist in the same zoo.

I cannot in my heart say that only the educational setup is at fault. We are to blame for ever allowing anyone to believe that the art of the theatre could wear the very restrictive corset of education. We are two separate things (the word "institution" does not seem to apply here.) And yet...seduction is so easy...at the very bottom, don't we want the same thing? To be opened, penetrated through a new experience and thereby changed, enlightened, whatever.

IN RHODE ISLAND, PERHAPS MORE THAN ANYWHERE, THE EDUCATORS HAVE BEEN SYMPATHETIC AND UNDERSTANDING.

In dealing with the educators, I have had to lie, be temperamental, cry, be deceitful, cajole, beg, pacify. Many times when I knew that only one course was at all possible for the theatre, I had to use all of the wrong reasons to convince others.

PLAY SELECTION HAS BEEN DONE THROUGH CURRICULUM ANALYSIS AND GROUP VOTE FROM THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENT HEADS.

The phrase "play selection" is still a very painful one here. Although it seems to have lost some of its magic power to do real harm to the theatre. A frighteningly dangerous thought: Educators should have some say over *what* their students are to see. I can't even begin to explain why this *must* (I repeat, MUST) be left in the hands of the theatre people.

There is not an educator alive that has given this thought as much time as the people in the theatre do. It is the reason that the sciences can be taught in a framework of our current school systems and the arts cannot. (If that sounds like a recommendation to change the educational approach to the arts in this country, it is!)

IN SUMMATION, THE WHOLE PROGRAM HAS BEEN A POLITICAL FOOTBALL AND ROGER STEVENS WAS VERY SMART TO DROP IT LIKE A HOT POTATO.

It was and is a program so daring and so creative that I sometimes am amazed that we are "still dancing". It doesn't even matter that Roger Stevens and Kathryn Bloom probably created this program for most of the wrong reasons. This temple where we worship is alive, ALIVE, ALIVE! It will be some time before the good people of New England will be able to snuff out the flame that has been lighted.

IT HAS BEEN RUMORED THAT I HATE CHILDREN. THEREFORE, ARE WE TO CONCLUDE THAT A PROGRAM CAN BE MORE OBJECTIVELY CARRIED OUT IF THIS IS TRUE?

It helps.

To paraphrase dear Sean O'Casey--Education and theatre in Rhode Island have come a long way together in a golden canoe, over many waters, bright and surly, sometimes sending spray asplash on our faces. But education was ever listening for the beat from the wings of the angel of fear. So they would get out now and walk safe on a crowded road.

We are plowing ahead into what is being termed our "transition" year, somewhat encouraged by student enthusiasm and school and legislative commitments to purchase tickets they have been getting "free" over the past three years. Details are not yet worked out, but we can say for sure that artistic and educational decisions will rest as always in the hands of the theatre people as will the "authority to approve" and "administer funds". Why not? Whatever success we have had has been on that basis.

Best regards,

Adrian

NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CARL J. DOLCE, SUPERINTENDENT

Educational Laboratory Theatre Project
Ground Floor, 546 Carondelet Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

May 23, 1969

Mrs. Mary Louise Barksdale
Administrative Assistant
Central Midwestern Regional
  Educational Laboratory
10646 St. Charles Rock Road
St. Ann, Missouri 63074

Dear Weezie:

This is my third attempt to write a summary report for CEMREL regarding the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, New Orleans, and I am determined that this time shall, indeed, be the charm. What do you say about one of the most rewarding, frustrating, and complex encounters of theatre and education?

Educational aims of the project as stated in the original project proposal read, "to introduce students to drama as a viable expressive form, and to enrich the study of drama through innovative involvement of a professional company." These goals, I feel, have been met. Through attendance at twelve productions, the world of theatre has been introduced successfully to thousands of students and educators and has found an exciting and developing berth in the school program. The many ramifications of the program have added dimension to the full potential of the theatre involvement.

Are other comparable theatre/school ventures worth pursuing? What say the pioneers of the field? This pioneer says, "yes." With any march into the wilderness, one must expect to face pitfalls and to come out with battlescars. We have found the pitfalls and encountered the battlescars, but the end results have certainly been worth it. As I reflect on the thousands (120,000, actually,) who have experienced a direct impact with the living theatre and with the literature that serve as its blueprint, I cannot help but feel immensely gratified at the opportunities and doors that this project has opened and the lives that it has deeply touched.

The fact that all secondary students within individual participating schools attended, that all public and parochial schools in the New Orleans Metropolitan Area were represented, that the program was incorporated as a feature of the English curriculum program, that all students received reading copies of the plays, and that there were a range of closely coordinated activities and teaching supplements, all significantly contributed to the general community and school impetus and endorsement of the program.

The theatre opportunities offered have been instrumental in helping teachers and administrators to expand and re-evaluate the boundaries of the "classroom" and have offered new opportunities for assessing the role of the arts in general education. The students have been exposed to an entirely new dimension of the arts and have embraced it. This student affection has been an eagerly received motivating force to all individuals concerned with the project.

In the light of the three years experience with the project, I would recommend the following guidelines:

1. There must be understanding between the theatre and the educational institutions as to the objectives of the other. Understandably, the theatre will focus on the development of an artistic product and the development of a thriving and financially successful theatre. The educational objectives of this project were intense ones, and all schedules, study materials, communication networks, student workshops, teacher inservices, and other activities were all calculated to provide an effective theatre and educational experience. The theatre must recognize the educational goals, and not view them as a challenge to artistic integrity, or as a threat to the artistic product. Going to the theatre without the coordination of proper preparation and followup does not constitute a valid educational experience in terms of project aims. The theatre must recognize this, as the educational institutions must recognize the theatre commitments to its own natural functions. Areas of confrontation must be recognized and worked out satisfactorily for all. In the past, most theatre/school ventures in the U. S. usually meant discount tickets at previews or for limited engagements of the theatrical productions to schools who wished to attend. The Educational Laboratory Theatre Project was beyond that simple type of involvement of theatre and education. At the risk of laboring the point, let me say that the understanding or lack of comprehension as to the objectives of each group can determine the outcome of a successful or non-successful theatre/school venture.

It is to be noted here, that this viewing of objectives is in no way limited to dialogue or negotiations between project directors and artistic directors but permeates the way all participants in front of and behind the footlights relate to each other. Although administrative agents from both theatre and education influence the effectiveness of the project, the individual schools, students, and facilities have formed very strong opinions concerning the theatre, both in its attitude or general image, as well as in its productions. This is particularly true in the case where the same theatre company and staff are available over a three year period. Disenchantment between the two parties can weaken the success of the program; good communication increases it. An understanding of what the other party is about helps everyone.

2. The selection of plays is the touchiest area of the project because it brings to focus the differing objectives of each group. The objectives of each group determine their priorities in the selection of plays. No director can be expected to direct a play that is not a happy choice for him in terms of his own artistic desires and in keeping with the realities of his theatre company and goals. Nor can educational institutions be expected to send their students to plays as part of a curriculum program that they do not endorse as valid opportunities for the fulfillment of educational goals. In this project, the plays were viewed as part of the English curriculum program, and the suitability for these purposes demanded certain priorities. Naturally, areas of confrontation occurred. As long as both groups recognize the objectives of the other, solutions can be found. This is the area in which mutual trust, or the lack of it, will destroy or undermine a project, or will result in some satisfactory solution.

3. An effective network of communication must be established not only between theatre and education but within each school itself and the project office regarding the overview of the program and its implications in terms of the individual school. Proper orientation and continued communication with the schools can make the difference between a project that is viewed as "an intrusion," or "an unrelated activity that got students out of school," and "Our Educational Laboratory Theatre Project," or "Our Repertory Theatre."

4. The purchase of reading scripts for all students in conjunction with the theatre productions provided an extremely effective and receptive educational program. The educational objectives

of a program of dramatic literature in conjunction with the living theatre productions were not hindered from maximum effectiveness because of lack of scripts for reading, study, and reference. The availability of individual copies for each student provided added dimensions of student enrichment, curriculum fulfillment, and strong identity with the theatre experience.

5. Teacher instruction and assistance is necessary to effectively coordinate and implement the program. The establishment of study packets, inservice sessions, teacher workshops, teacher previews, and constant communication as to the educational opportunities and objectives for both English and speech teachers were significant aspects of the program that are recommended to other theatre/school ventures.

6. Diverse activities serve to increase the dimensions of the program. Student press conferences, drama student workshops, drama teacher workshops, English teacher workshops, teacher previews, visits of actors into the schools, special assembly programs, and the touring show all helped, in our case, to knit the program together with many additional points of entry for both students and teachers beyond the main theatre experience.

7. The planning of a long-range financial structure is recommended to all future projects. It is to the best advantage for a continuing program to have some built-in structural devices for phasing out of funds with specific amounts or percentages of funds designated to be taken over by local agencies. Definite plans do serve as a beacon in the light of differing objectives and the fortunes of politics, finance, and priorities.

   Perhaps, in the case of this project, less money over a longer period of time with continuation beyond a three year period dependent upon a certain percentage of school, state, or community funds would have provided a central objective to work for, and would have channeled energy and commitment into a coordinated effort in terms of program continuation beyond the grant period.

   The U. S. Office of Education and the National Endowment of the Arts are to be commended for their resourcefulness and vision in making such a complex project possible, for without their conception and funds, we would not have experienced the endless opportunities and beauty of the past three years nor would we be in the position of seeking continued new horizons in the arts for the schools.

Sincerely,

Shirley Trusty
Supervisor
Educational Laboratory Theatre

ST/gw

GREGORY PECK
1041 NORTH FORMOSA AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90046

March 6, 1970

Miss Nancy Schanbacher
Technical Writer
Educational Laboratory Theatre Project
CEMREL
10646 St. Charles Rock Road
St. Ann, Missouri 63074

Dear Miss Schanbacher:

The Inner City Cultural Center is a success in that it survives and offers a new channel of expression in theater, dance and music for minority artists in Los Angeles. However, as the local host group for Educational Laboratory Theater, federally financed to bring dramatic literature to life for high school students, it must be counted a failure.

It is difficult to organize a new repertory company. The Los Angeles group had also to deal with the troublesome problems created by racial misunderstanding and distrust. A consistent professional standard was never achieved.

In a sense, federal money has been diverted and used for a purpose other than that for which it was intended. Los Angeles students have been deprived of a chance to profit by exposure to professional theater as part of their education. And yet, the Inner City group survives and fights its way toward better standards on its own terms. Actors, directors and other artists profit by the experience, develop their skills. Some, emerging from the group, are bringing new vitality to the mainstream of the performing arts.

Although the Inner City group turned out to be something quite different in concept from that which I and many other professional people supported in the beginning, it deserves continuity. It is my hope that ICCC will find support from another federal or foundation source, once the Laboratory Theater experiment has run its course.

Yours sincerely,

Gregory Peck

Gregory Peck

NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ALTON W. COWAN, SUPERINTENDENT

March 31, 1970

Mr. James Hoetker
Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory, Inc.
10646 St. Charles Rock Road
St. Ann, Missouri 63074

Dear Jim:

A very tardy answer to your February letter.

Jim, it becomes difficult to truly determine cause and effect, but I have attempted to write a short overview statement as I see it. As I am sure you know, Repertory opened its fourth season on March 20 with "Threepenny Opera" and June Havoc as Artistic Director who is knocking herself out to make it work this time.

It is hard to measure direct cause and effect regarding the general areas of education and the arts, but I feel that the three years of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project in New Orleans helped to create a more receptive atmosphere for the arts in this community.

Although many war stories can be told of the ELT Project, I believe that it is reasonable to say that thousands of students enjoyed theatre who would never have been exposed to it, and that thousands of parents were surprised and pleased that their children were going to the theatre through the schools and that they liked the experience. This fact has certainly helped to create awareness of arts programs through the schools.

The ELT Project created, in my opinion, more interest on the part of artists in realizing the potential and the practicality of playing to student audiences. A newly formed Council of the Arts for Children for Metropolitan New Orleans has often referred to the student program at Repertory in discussing potential programs for the students.

Directly, I feel that the ELT Project was instrumental in changing attitudes toward receptivity of the arts in the schools, and that such awareness helped in the creation of the office of Cultural Resources, New Orleans Public Schools.

Shirley Trusty
Supervisor, Cultural Resources
New Orleans Public Schools

ST:dc

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY | AT RALEIGH
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE DEAN
ZIP 27607

April 9, 1970

Mrs. Mary Louise Barksdale
Assistant Director
Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, CEMREL
10646 St. Charles Rock Rd.
St. Ann, Missouri - 63074

Dear Mrs. Barksdale:

This letter is a brief summary of my reactions to the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project which operated in New Orleans.

I am convinced that the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project is one of the most significant ever implemented in the New Orleans Public School System. The project offered for the first time an opportunity for many students and teachers to view living theatre. The plays presented made more realistic and more viable attempts by the school to develop an appreciation for literature and the theatre. I am certain that it is not possible to measure fully the impact upon the lives of the thousands and thousands of students who attended the plays, most of whom were disadvantaged.

The spontaneous enthusiastic response of the students in the audience was a thrilling experience for me. Such response was sufficient testimony to indicate that the experiences were "real" ones. The efforts by the students through fund raising to save the project were another bit of evidence concerning the meaningfulness of the experiences. New Orleans had never experienced a drive by students voluntarily organized to save an educational program.

The primary weakness of the project was the length of funding which was available. Although the project had developed firm roots in the student community, its roots in the adult community were too weak to withstand a total withdrawal of funds after a three year period. It is my hope that in the future there will be a more sustained financial commitment to such projects.

Sincerely,

Carl J. Dolce
Dean

gh

STATEMENT ON EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY THEATRE PROJECT

There can be no doubt that the positive factors outweighed the negative in the New Orleans Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. Many, many students saw and read many plays, and by and large they went away with happy feelings, I believe, about the theatre and dramatic literature.

The problems of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project were complex, but they can be broken down into a few categories.

First, logistics. This was Shirley Trusty's headache, but she had my deepest sympathy when, on top of the normal difficulties that go along with getting 40,000 students downtown, some principal would complain that taking students out of the classrooms four days a year disrupted education.

Second, the artist vs. educator problem. Again, I was on the sidelines, but it seemed clear that Stuart Vaughan had cast the educators as little old ladies. He did not want us to be flexible, which we were, but pliable, and we were not. There are few creative, intelligent human beings alive who could not work well with Shirley Trusty and Edwin Friedrich. Damn the luck! - Stuart Vaughan was one of them.

Third, poor teaching. A really bad teacher can kill anything, and there are some poor teachers in every school system. I frankly think we have less than our share in New Orleans, but such teachers can give a good program a bad name. Average teachers could make use of Shirley Trusty's excellent study packets, and superior teachers just soared with the program. But the uncreative, uncomitted few make it hard to defend the program to critics who point to the damage that they do.

Fourth, follow-through. The federal money is gone, and so is theatre for most students. Our school system couldn't even afford funds for a dignified phase-out, so Rep is gone. We console ourselves by saying, "At least it did happen, and for three years."

A final point on the positive side. Despite debates over whether dramatic literature is supposed to be read or "experienced," one of the greatest boons to education that Rep brought was the free paperback copies of the plays for each individual student. Kids got the feel of the paperback as a medium - books that weren't sacred, like textbooks or library books, books that invited the profanation of marginal notes, underlined passages, and pages folded over to keep the place.

I can't prove it, but I strongly suspect that Rep is partially responsible for the continuing flood of paperbacks in so many of our schools. Principals are no longer suspicious of paperback-centered literature programs; teachers are using paperbacks more and more to individualize instruction; and students are reading books, thank God, for enjoyment and not just for book reports.

Charles Suhor

Charles Suhor
Supervisor of English
New Orleans Public Schools

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

CATHERINE M. CASSERLY
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
IN CHARGE OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

150 Washington Street
Providence, R.I. 02903

April 10, 1970

Mrs. Mary Louise Barksdale
Assistant Director
Educational Laboratory Theatre Project
Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory, Inc.
10646 St. Charles Rock Road
St. Ann, Missouri 63074

Dear Mary Lou:

I am delighted to hear from a colleague of our most exciting years in Federal Programs. Those were the days when plenty of money enabled us to do very different and exciting things for youngsters.

Attached are my comments for your final report.

Best wishes for your future efforts in the educational scene.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Catherine M. Casserly
Assistant Superintendent
in charge of
FEDERAL PROGRAMS

CMC/asf

Attachment

COMMENTS

1. Project Discovery provided experiences for high school students in Rhode Island which, in the best sense of the word, provided the most concrete symbols of the most overused words of the Federal Programs' vocabulary: innovative, exemplary, creative.

2. The magnitude of the operation of 40,000 students viewing each theatrical performance illustrates that the mechanics, only, had to be almost flawless to accomplish the movement: the marriage of two totally unlike agencies, theatre and school for three years illustrates success, and the curriculum changes which were made by English Departments in High Schools throughout the state are possibly the most permanent success component of the total operation.

3. Project Discovery was:

   innovative in that it moved all Rhode Island students towards one educational experience; creative in that it created totally new experience for most of those young participants and totally new aspirations for leisure time activities, and exemplary in that the perfection component of the Trinity Players as portrayed by their artistic Director, Adrian Hall, is internationally known.

   Its failures are obliterated by its successes: in fact they were minimal and infinitesimal.

   Its implications for the future are seen in the continuous support of the original professional (teacher) audience, and the student audience now following the Trinity Players as subscription or individual play attendees.

   The projected move of Trinity Square Repertory Company to a new site and the erection of a larger theatre will be concrete evidence of the continued interest started by Project Discovery because the pre-1965 Trinity image attracted fewer participants. Since Project Discovery, the increase in number of youthful participants is obvious.

   The lasting and relevant memorial to Project Discovery exists in the high schools throughout the State where the focus on the drama has become more than a passing reference.

   Attached are a few pages of comments of teachers and students who are true witnesses of the success of Project Discovery.

Attachments

REACTIONS

The letters which follow and those in the Addenda indicate the way in which students and teachers reacted to the productions of Project Discovery.

From Shirley Morin Maynard, Chairman of English at Burrillville Junior-Senior High School:

In its two years of existence in Rhode Island, Project Discovery has had a unique and decidedly significant influence on the teaching of English in my school. Its impact has been twofold--on our students and on the English curriculum.

For example, before "St. Joan", many of our students had never attended a "live" stage performance. And, in predictable fashion, their response to this first production was an enthusiastic and complete endorsement. However, this unsophisticated approach to theater was short-lived. Following this first production, our students became critics and their comments were much more discriminating. They allied themselves with a particular character on stage, recognized strengths and weaknesses from their point of view, drew comparisons with past performances, made observations. In a very short time, I could see that an important cultural dimension had been added to their lives.

At the same time, Project Discovery has had a stimulating effect on our English curriculum. Not only has it forced us to focus on the place of drama in the English curriculum, but it has also enriched it with the addition of plays by Shaw, O'Neil, and Wilde. And it has done more than that. With a play such as "Julius Caesar" which had been traditionally taught at the 11th grade level, it was necessary to restructure the teaching of this play for the 10th grade. This, in turn, has led to a rethinking of the wisdom of "locking" specific pieces of literature at a specific grade level . .

And thanks to Mr. Cumming and Miss Vallely for providing us with texts, films, records, and study guides, we were able to experiment with large group instruction and team teaching . . . . .

Project Discovery has made theater a very real thing for students in our school. One student said, "It makes English come alive." And indeed, it has. It has exposed our students to "first-rate" theater; it has pointed up the humanistic tradition in literature and has emphasized the relevancy in a play by Shakespeare or Shaw;it has reshaped--to some extent--and enriched--to a great extent--the drama curriculum in our school. But most important, it has opened up a new world to our students, and has started to shape an attitude toward drama that will continue to influence them throughout their lives.

From Alice R. Hurl, English Department Head at Pilgrim High School:

May I express our gratitude and pleasure at two performances presented at Pilgrim High School by Henry Butler and William Cain of the Triminity Square Players. Students were permitted to see two different types of actors in two different types of presentations. Mr. Butler, in "Willy's Killers," entertained, amused, and thrilled students with his varied talents and dynamic personality in scenes from three major Shakespearan plays. Mr. Cain, on the other hand dealt with a question-and-answer forum during which he discussed the role of the actor, the technical background of the theatre, and specifically the performance of "Macbeth" which 700 Pilgrim students had seen.

I am so pleased that Project Discovery offered students this kind of opportunity through which they gained further appreciation of living theatre on a more personal level. This has been one of the highlights of the Project's offerings to students throughout the state.

From Alfred J. Gagne, an alumnus of the Vocational Technical School of Rhode Island:

I am writing to thank you for asking me to become a member of your Project Discovery Alumni Club. I have filled out the form. However, I am sorry, I will not be able to attend any of those plays. The reason is because I am serving my country in the United States Air Force. Please do not be disappointed because my wife and I are looking forward to attending many of your plays in the future. I am a former graduate of the Vocational Technical School of Rhode Island, and I enjoyed every play the school attended. Please notify me in case anything else occurs.

My wife and I will appreciate keeping in contact with you. I plan, in the near future, to attend some plays while home on leave with my wife.

From Miss Kathryn Bloom, The director of the Arts and Education Program at the John D. Rockefeller 3rd Fund in New York City (as quoted by the Providence Journal on Saturday, June 7, 1969):

Miss Bloom said that one problem in educational programs in the arts "stems from the belief of too many school administrators that activities in the arts are pleasant for children but not really relevant to the school program."

She continued "The state's Project Discovery however, is a refreshing exception. Project Discovery is closely related to what happens in the classroom."

EFFECTS ON THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

Many other effects of Project Discovery on the educational community can be noted:

a. there was continued cooperation with Project Discovery among not only the 586 English teachers throughout the State of Rhode Island, but other faculty members and departments as well;

b. in more than one case, there was a re-organization and complete change of curriculum;

c. there was continually increasing interdepartmental cooperation in preparing the students for the performances involving Foreign Language, History, and Social Studies;

d. Students, in increasing numbers, attended evening performances of the Trinity Square Repertory Company at their own expense;

e. The number of continuing requests from Rhode Island schools to include members of their 9th grade classes;

f. the number of requests from Rhode Island Junior High Schools to attend Project Discovery performances; and

g. the number of requests from high schools in neighboring states to be able tp participate in the program.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
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INFORMATION • INNOVATION

CENTRAL MIDWESTERN REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY, INC.

Educational Laboratory Theatre Project
1611 Beverly Blvd., Room 101, Los Angeles, California 90026
Telephone: Area Code 213, 623-5326

April 24, 1970

Mrs. Mary Louise Barksdale
Assistant Director ELTP
CEMREL, Inc.
10646 St. Charles Rock Road
St. Ann, Missouri 63074

Dear Mrs. Barksdale,

In response to your request for my observations of the ELT Project in Los Angeles over the past three years, I feel that first we must realize that my position as Coordinator for CEMREL limited my work to the responsibility of CEMREL, namely, in the area of gathering data and processing such data for evaluation and research purposes.

Probably the most gratifying thing over this period of time was what I consider to have been excellent relations with the theatre personnel. Although my contact with the theatre was somewhat limited, I always found the staff most willing to assist and cooperate when asked to do so. I have admired the manner in which Dr. Stern, as project coordinator, organized the work of that office. Certainly the services he provided, such as workshops, conferences, in-service meetings, bulletins, and of great importance the assistance to teachers and students in the curriculum area were of value to so many. The daily logistics of bussing several hundred students must have also been a daily headache, yet this task was handled with a minimum of errors. My work brought me into contact with the Associate Superintendent, (three different associates in the three years) Principals, Department chairmen, teachers, and students. Although I found opposition to the Project from some of these people, I certainly never found any opposition to the work CEMREL had to do in the schools. Everyone was willing to cooperate and to expedite the many questionnaires and interviews we requested.

The opposition I encountered from school administrators, chairmen, and teachers would fall into three categories - (1) the loss of school time to teachers and students, (2) the choice of plays and the manner in which they were produced, and (3) the difficulty of proper supervision in the theatre. Assuming this Project continues or might be undertaken in some other city, I would like to venture the following suggestions.

1. Loss of school time to both teachers and students could be reduced if curtain call came at 9:15 or 9:30 instead of the usual 10:15 or 10:30 scheduled the past three years. Busses could have been available by 8:30 for most schools. This schedule coupled with a play not over 2-1/2 hours in length would have made it possible for students to be back to their school by 12:30 - have lunch (another point of criticism) and be able to attend their two afternoon classes.

2. Everyone concerned has an idea about play selection. I do not know the solution. However I am firmly convinced this is a problem that needs a solution and more careful planning and consideration between the theatre and the schools.

I don't think there is any question in the world of the theatre but that the Director/Producer has the right to interpret and present the play as he see's fit. This is fine when it is produced for a paying audience who choose to see the play. But when you are producing a play for 14 and 15 year old youngsters, many seeing live theatre for the first time, (this is what ELT is all about in my opinion) and being indirectly a captive audience, then we need to think twice. With a little common sense on the part of the Director/Producer, some of the problems that arose in Tartuffe, Fantasticks, and West Side Story might have been averted. There were just too many objections to scenes, lines, dress, and gestures that could have been changed for student audiences. Also keep in mind that one fourth of the schools involved in this project were church oriented.

3. The question of supervision of students is a problem whenever and wherever you have them under your jurisdiction. Their behaviour varied tremendously. I can only suggest that in the future more responsibility must be assumed by school personnel. This would mean that from the principal on down a greater emphasis on instructing all students in what is proper behaviour while attending a performance.

This has been a very satisfying and unique experience for me. I am very grateful to Dr. Russell, Dr. Handrick, Dr. Hansen, Dr. Hoetker, and to you for your wonderful cooperation, help and guidance. My hope is that your final reports regarding this project will be of value for future planning of similar projects.

Sincerely,

Norman B. McLeod
Area Coordinator

NBM/mm

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AREA CODE 401
861-5700

May 4, 1970

Mrs. Mary Louise Barksdale
Central Midwestern Regional Educational
Laboratory, Inc.
10646 St. Charles Rock Road
St. Anne, Missouri 63074

RE: Educational Laboratory Theatre Project

Dear Mrs. Barksdale:

I am sorry I have not had an opportunity to reply to your letter of March 18, 1970 prior to this time. I had been busily engaged in many matters and have not been able to give your letter the attention it deserves.

I became interested in the project at the very inception, when I first learned that the Trinity Square Repertory Company might be considered the possible vehicle for conducting a state-wide or regional program to make available to high school students classical plays over a period of three years. As Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Trinity Square Repertory Company, I was intrigued by the opportunity for the theater company and by the opportunity to be presented to the high school students.

Of course, over the ensuing three or four years I had occasion to closely observe the effect of the program as instituted here, upon the theater and to a much lesser extent upon the students. It is my firm belief that much of the success, which I believe resulted, came about because the theater company here was in existence and was not created for the project. This is important, because the citizen support for the theater was already present, and such citizen support is necessary to be sure that the theater objectives would not be overcome by educational objectives of the project and also to insure that the theater would survive the three year project, so that the program could continue subsequent to the three year project. Without such citizen support to the theater and its artistic director, it is my belief that the continuation of the program would not have resulted. Of course, this view is based upon the belief that the initial concepts and objectives of the program were specifically to introduce an innovative change in the teaching of drama to high school students and that such changes could only be as a result of professional theater going experience together with related educational changes.

I believe the results that were attained here were best demonstrated by the actions of the students in the spring of 1969, wherein, they demonstrated at the Rhode Island State House for financial support for the continuation of the project. But, besides that, I have spoken to dozens of students and possibly almost one hundred parents over the years, a great majority of whom have witnessed the impact of the program upon their families. I have also spoken with a number of educators who also have applauded the concepts and results of the program. This is not to say there have not been criticisms, but I would dare say that the great amount of criticism has come from teachers and administrators, particularly those who have not been involved in teaching of drama. To many of them, the program has interfered with their normal schedule, has required expenditures of too much money and has done nothing more than attempt to change the usual pattern. To many, this attitude is symptomatic of many of our difficulties with our educational system today. They have also been critical of teachers of drama who have been concerned with the plays selected, and while to some extent they have a right to be critical, nevertheless, they should bear in mind that there must be a final decision with respect to the choice of the plays and it must lie with those who are directing and producing the plays rather than those who see the plays. This is, of course, a very touchy area, but intelligent and mutual respect must be adopted by all those involved.

It is my very strong belief that this program can succeed here, and in other cities, if the professional theater group is separate and apart of the educational function, if it has a knowledgeable and strong artistic director, who is interested in achieving not only his own theatrical aspirations, but who is also interested in developing an enlightened citizenry who will be his audiences of the future.

Very truly yours,

Milton Stanzler

MS/bor

The Trinity Square Repertory Company

June 3, 1970
Providence, R. I.

Mrs. Mary Louise Barksdale
Asst. Dir. Educational Lab Theatre Project
CEMREL, 10646 St. Charles Rock Road
St. Ann, Missouri 63074

Dear Mary Louise:

My association with Project Discovery at Trinity Square for the past four years has been a most exciting one, and I am delighted to make it a matter of record. In that time I have seen twenty or thirty thousand high school students per season discover what the theatre is, and the creative results have been evident. After the first season I met with students eager to discuss the relative merits of Shakespeare and Shaw, of Chekov and O'Neill, whose work they were scarcely aware of until Project Discovery brought them to the theatre. I saw the development of a student Workshop program, special instruction in various phases of theatre, conducted on Sacred Saturday, requiring that the student transport himself to and from, which drew participants from all over the state. And I saw an impressive demonstration by several thousand students who organized themselves into a beneficent marching force to encourage their local communities to support Project Discovery when its original federal funding had come to an end.

I know that I am safe in saying that for Rhode Island there has been no other institution involved with the arts that has touched the lives of so many people in the state, the adults as well as the children. When the children start leading their parents to the theatre, someone must be doing several things right.

In frequent meetings with the teachers of the state, I have heard repeatedly how much Project Discovery has facilitated their teaching, not only of drama, but of poetry and literature in general. Much of this has come about because of Project Discovery's in-school visits, which have included informal lectures, poetry readings, presentation of one act plays, etc. As one teacher put it: "an actor from Trinity Square has only to mention an author, a play, a poem in passing and students raid the library to investigate his suggestion who couldn't be dragged there by the best intentioned teacher." That contribution--to become an ally of the teacher while maintaining his own work as an artist in the theatre--is one that I have seen this company consistently give.

As to problems or suggestions, the only one that occurs to me is that there has to be closer understanding between the theatre and the schools to be sure the tail doesn't want to wag the dog. The educational systems of the schools are one thing; the educational function of a theatre is another. The theatre has to determine under its artistic policy how it can contribute to the school programs. There has been, I know, criticism of Trinity Square's choice of plays because they did not seem to dove tail neatly into the curriculum of the public schools. Obviously that neat fit is not possible with every production, but I think it has been demonstrated that there are many ways in which a good theatre can contribute to the schools and the community, while pursuing its first task which is to produce varied and exciting theatre.

Sincerely,

Henry Butler

Henry Butler

57 Second Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10003
June 6, 1970

Mrs. Mary Louise Barksdale
Assistant Director
Educational Laboratory Theatre Project
CEMREL
10646 St. Charles Rock Road
St. Ann, Missouri 63074

Dear Mrs. Barksdale:

Please forgive the lateness of this response to your letter of March 18; it has not been a quiet time this spring. My real statement about the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project is in my "Times" article, which I enclose; I hope you will find room for it, but I also enclose a brief summary backward-looking statement as well. I hope it does not arrive too late to be of use.

Is there any way in which I could see a copy of the final report?

In any case, I'm honored to have been asked for an opinion.

Very truly yours,

Julius Novick

Julius Novick

Statement on the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project:

My experience of the Project comes almost entirely from my visits to Providence, where it seems to have worked very well. It has left behind it a tradition of student attendance at Trinity Square productions that is being continued even now that there is no automatic federal support, and, as a byproduct, it appears to have strengthened the company and helped it develop to the point where it is now one of the most interesting resident theatres in the country.

One reason, I think, for the success in Providence is that the Project's funds were given to a previously existing theatre company, created to play for adults, and therefore the company did not have to overcome the stigma of being essentially a purveyor of entertainment for kids. I hope that the chance to participate in a similar program will soon be offered to a great many more theatres.

Aside from these few observations, I'd like my New York Times article to speak for me, since it is an account of my impressions written while they were still fresh.

Julius Novick

* * * * *

CAN O'NEILL STILL CORRUPT OUR YOUTH?

by Julius Novick

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New York Times, Sunday, March 19, 1967

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Mr. C. Bernard Jackson, Executive Director of The Inner City Cultural Center, found himself too pressed for time to put his observations on the ELT Project into a form he would care to see in print. Rather than have us, as we suggested, print a version of one of our interviews with him, he suggested we consider printing the following essay, written for Variety, "not because it has anything to do with the Project," but because it makes clear Mr. Jackson's feelings about the social role of the arts and about the mission of the ICCC.

ARTS IN EDUCATION

By C. Bernard Jackson

THE PERFORMING ARTS MAY PROVE TO BE MORE IMPORTANT TO THE SURVIVAL OF FUTURE GENERATIONS OF AMERICANS THAN READING, WRITING, OR ARITHMETIC

Members of the Inner City Cultural Center, a minority-run (Asians, Blacks, Chicanos) Los Angeles organization which grew out of the urban explosions of 1965 and '66, are not only committed to the thesis that our society must quickly develop new and better tools for diagnosing and treating its ailments but are convinced the performing arts is a close at hand instrument which, with a bit of honing, might just do the job.

The simultaneous existence of explosive frustration and near total apathy is symptomatic of a society on the verge of panic. It seems obvious to almost anyone working in or near an urban ghetto that our civilization, already neurotic, could become dangerously psychotic. AT ANY MOMENT THE GIANT ID MAY RISE UP FROM THE SUBTERRANEAN CAVERNS OF THE HUMAN MIND WHERE IT HAS BEEN LURKING FOR CENTURIES AND DESTROY THE EARTH!!! The cause? -- Steadily increasing pressure to perform tasks the social organism does not feel competent to handle.

SCIENCE, responsible for the fingertip availability (unfortunately to no more than a quarter of the world's population) of a vast storehouse of eye-popping, mouth-watering goodies, has given us an extremely useful tool -- THE CONCEPT OF "DATA" -- that is, facts defined as numerable, quantifiable entities each distinct from every other. . . separably, individually evaluable. This concept has served us well and certainly, without it, we'd have to find another way to get to the moon. There are, however, inherent difficulties in the matter which become evident when one attempts to examine a relevant, popular term such as "knowledge explosion." The phrase seems to be used to imply that data is accumulating at such an astonishingly rapid rate that we "mere" humans will soon have no choice but to put our well being entirely into the hands of (or rather onto the tape decks of) an instrument designed to digest and manipulate nearly limitless quantities of facts -- THE FANTASTICK COMPUTER!!! Pulled INEXORABLY TOWARD the time when they will govern THE UNIVERSE, heroic man resists. He rightly suspects, since it, the new MACHINE GOD, is of his own devising, something can and will go incredibly WRONG (Is it true THE BRAIN already makes major Pentagon decisions?) and at a faster rate than has ever heretofore been possible. The idea of a data-process governed society is so frightening to us because deep down inside we know there may be an explanation, perhaps, even a valid reason why, while in school, most of us were never really very good at math. There is no such thing as a perfect circle in nature or a perfect square. A computer governed society would, in fact, be inevitable if the "knowledge explosion" were anything but an erroneous way of interpreting man's changing relationship to the environment. There is no "knowledge explosion." INFORMATION CAN NEITHER BE CREATED OR DESTROYED!!! (Jackson's Law #1) There is no more to know than there ever was to know. The existence of more books does not signify the existence of more knowledge and may, in fact, mean that more and more of our information is, rather than coming to us directly from the environment, being filtered to us through secondary sources and is therefore diluted, less accurate. Books which have opened so many new worlds have also been chiefly responsible for turning many of us into environmental illiterates who would have a hard time walking through a vacant lot without stepping on a snake if there were a species of snake capable of surviving in our modern plastic bottle, pull open top ALL-ALUMINUM can, indestructible fiberglass tire vacant lot environ -- a major contribution of SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY to our way of life made possible by your tax dollar and AMERICAN BUYING POWER.

Perhaps indicative of our dilemma is the fact that many of the actors who performed regularly for Los Angeles High School students during the three years in which the Inner City Repertory Company participated in the Office of Education/National Endowment - sponsored Educational Laboratory Theatre Program report that young, poor Blacks and Chicanos noted for reading poorly often exhibit a considerably higher R.Q. (Reality Quotient) than their middle-class White counterparts. The consensus of actor opinion seems to be that non-White students, although mostly less well-prepared and practically always less well behaved, were markedly more alert to subtlety and nuance, more profoundly moved by genuine tragedy, less easily swayed by melodrama, and quicker to detect any false note either in the writing or the playing. It is safe to assume the actors' reports are accurate since it's obvious young people from low economic backgrounds get larger and more highly concentrated uncensored doses of the real world than youngsters from more privileged backgrounds. They learn to cope at an early age or perish. It may well be that the meek and the poor will truly inherit the earth simply because they are forced to confront the earth's requirements for survival more directly. Our problem is not simply to teach our young how to read, write, and multiply (Germany was one of the most literate nations in the world at the time of Hitler's rise) but is to carefully determine exactly what equipment we need to deal with current (and future) demands of our environment.

The French by recently exploding a hydrogen bomb over Tahiti thus wiping out all remaining romantic (literary) notions about PARADISE on earth did us all a service. They underlined once and for finally the fact that there is NO PLACE TO RUN TO -- NO PLACE TO HIDE. WE WILL EITHER SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS TOGETHER NOW OR HANG ON OUR HANG-UPS ALL IN A ROW.

What are we to do? Religion, Philosophy and the Sciences have all failed, thus far, to effectively soothe the savage man-beast. (A recent study of American religious institutions indicated there may even be a negative correlation between devoutness and compassion for one's fellow man.)

ONE ANCIENT WEAPON-TOOL REMAINS. ONE PROVEN USEFUL IN DAYS OF YORE WHEN MANED LIONS ROAMED THE PLAINS AND MIGHTY ELEPHANTS GRAZED WITHOUT FEAR. ITS POINT IS BROKEN, THE BLADE DULL FROM DISUSE BUT IT IS POTENTIALLY AS STRONG AS EVER. IT IS TIME TO BRING OUT THAT TOOL KEPT IN RESERVE SO LONG -- THAT COURAGE MACHINE WHICH HAS THE POWER TO LULL AND CALM THOSE TORTUROUSLY HOT FIRES WHICH, REPEATEDLY, DRIVE US TO COMMIT THE MOST BARBAROUS ATROCITIES IN THE NAME OF SELF-DEFENSE (Defense from self?). MUSIC (originally used to mean all the arts) HATH POWER TO SOOTHE THE SAVAGE BEAST!!!

The Muses -- the Arts -- can provide the continual reassurance, the feeling of satisfaction, of completion, of orderliness, and sense which is our most desperate need at this juncture in our history if we are to not run amuck. We are like men with X-ray eyes who see every vein, every nerve fiber, every molecule, every particle of energy but cannot comprehend because our mathematics does not allow us to comprehend the fact that the whole is indeed GREATER than the sum of its parts. SCIENCE WITH ITS GIANT ATOM SMASHERS HAS BROKEN THE CLOCK AND ALL THE KING'S MEN AND EVEN THE BIGGEST KIDS ON THE BLOCK SEEM UNABLE TO FIT ALL THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER. THAT WILL HAVE TO BE DONE BY SOME NEW SPECIES OF CLOWN, FOOL, MEDICINE MAN. . . WITCH DOCTOR. . . PERFORMING ARTIST.

The arts can and will help us stay sane but in order to do so they must be taken seriously by everyone including the artist himself. The egocentric, childish blustering currently so identified with the artistic community is indicative of the low esteem in which the artist holds himself and is held. The careful listener will detect in the language and manner of even the contemporary world's most revered artistic personalities the pitiful pleadings of a victim who knows he is at the mercy of public and worse, private whim -- that the so-called "truths" which he, the artist, holds to be self-evident, the "standards" which he is continually trying to build as a foundation for his existence, are acknowledged by no one other than himself and coterie. His truths can all be overturned in a moment by John Cage, Irving Berlin, or The Mothers of Invention. Obviously, if the arts are to be taken seriously, if they are to assume a role of genuine importance in American society, what must be destroyed first is the concept of arts as "entertainment," "diversion from the boredom and worry of the workaday world," by definition, frivolous, superfluous, easily discardable. . . the first item to be considered when budgets are cut. Usually, art forms which think of themselves and are thought of as really not very important must resort to more and more bizarre techniques -- nudity, violence, "perversion" -- for holding the attention of an audience. For art to compete with sports on the level of sports the artist must shed real blood and then we are back in pre-Christian Rome.

THE ARTS ARE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO THE SURVIVAL AND CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT of civilized interaction among human beings. They are respected and supported, capable of exploring the widest and most profound areas of human experience. Unlike the Sciences, the arts recognize that man is not a "rational animal" but like every other animal responds with the whole surface of an enormously sensitive organism. The well-tuned human organism is so volatile because it is so acutely sensitive to stimuli. The arts are an instructional tool capable of transmitting in an instant everything the human organism needs to know about almost any circumstance in its entirety. The arts can do this precisely because they do not isolate facts but must treat facts as an ongoing process which cannot be made to stand still. He can reduce or magnify, bend, stretch, or twist but the process with which the artist deals cannot be dissected or enumerated. The arts can pinpoint precisely avenues suitable to exploration by other disciplines (Science, Religion, Philosophy) but in the final analysis, it will take the arts to again put back together what these other disciplines take apart. The sciences can help us achieve speeds of 18,000 miles per hour but they are unable to help us understand what 18,000 miles per hour is. . . nor can Philosophy; Religion has opted out. Our highways kill more Americans than our wars because Science and Industry have enabled us to travel at speeds up to 120 miles per hour in absolute air-conditioned comfort with no comprehension of the relationship of speed to the durability of the organism. (Fear keeps us from running down an exceptionally steep incline; we understand that if we fall, we are very likley to hurt ourselves.)

We are less familiar with the possibilities for use of the arts as an investigative -- even a problem-solving tool. We are all familiar with the use of the arts as a propaganda tool which can be used to push upon an unwary public almost anything from mouthwash to entire political philosophies. The arts can not only explain but enable us to understand in our guts why we must slow down when approaching a curve in a fast moving automobile. It can identify more precisely than a psychiatrist the exact nature of loneliness and other social diseases and by realigning the emotional premises which nourish the disease, can cure it. The arts can, with unerring precision, locate the supply route of prejudice and bigotry and by merciless bombardment, dry up the supply lines and end the problem. No educational institution which hopes to function meaningfully in the '70's and '80's can afford to not put the arts at the top -- the very top. It is of attention-priority. The American people most assuredly can no longer afford to have what may be its most valuable problem-solving tool left to the vicissitudes of "show business."

Our arts will have to be supported. This will cost the American people money -- not quite as much as has been spent on Religion and on Science but a substantial amount nevertheless. It's worth it. We may just find a way to turn the technological nightmare which we have thrust upon America's next generations into a relatively pleasant dream.

Part Seven

conclusions and recommendations

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

James Hoetker

With some disagreements about matters of emphasis, the current CEMREL staff subscribes to the conclusions in this chapter, as representing the most reasonable interpretations of the data we have gathered and the activities we have observed during the course of the ELT Project. The list of recommendations or suggestions at the end of the chapter were worked out by the staff acting as a committee of the whole, and they represent our best collective judgment on the ways that future programs resembling the ELT Project might be set up. Few of the recommendations are original with us, it should be remarked, but are largely derived from our analyses of criticisms and suggestions made by various artists and educators who participated in the Project or observed it.

Notably absent from this chapter are conclusions about the attainment of the Inner City Cultural Center's own social objectives. We have restricted ourselves here to the original artistic and educational objectives of the Project. The ICCC is dealt with at length elsewhere in this volume, in Part Three of Volume Two, and throughout Volume Three of this report.

When the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project was conceived in 1965, it was thought of as a pilot project, and one important reason for the Project's having a research component was so that the next step in the expansion and development of the concept could be based on hard evidence about the strengths and weaknesses of the ELT operation in its "first" three sites. By 1967, it was becoming clear that the ELT was fated to be an historical sport rather than a prototype; a curiosity like the WPA Theatre, rather than a trailblazing experiment in using the arts to humanize education. By 1970, one would have to be silly to propose that the knowledge gained during the life of the ELT Project be used to initiate new and improved federal theatre projects in other sites.

What has happened to the country, at the national level, and to the schools, at the local level, to bring about this change in climate is too familiar to need rehearsing. What does need to be emphasized is that though the ELT Project was flawed, as all really new ventures are bound to be, in both its conception and its execution, it was a success. It worked. It has had good effects, and the effects persist. As a pilot project, it has served its purpose admirably; and if the will and the money are ever again available, the experience of the Project can serve as a firm foundation upon which to erect more efficient and more effective programs.

In this chapter we will attempt to identify the variables which were most important in determining the degree of success of the Project, altogether and in each of its sites, and make recommendations against the day when such programs may again be seriously considered.

It is clear, from the history in the first chapter, that the Project accomplished its two primary goals: it brought live theatre to hundreds of thousands of students who otherwise would never have seen a play, and it gave three theatre companies an opportunity for growth and development they would not otherwise have had. The Project lasted its allotted span in all three sites, despite all sorts of unanticipated hazards, which is itself a testimonial to the basic practicality of the conception. In Rhode Island and Los Angeles, the Project promises to continue in some form into the future, and, in New Orleans, it led directly to the establishment of an active Cultural Affairs office in the New Orleans schools, and it prepared the ground for another professional company which shows some promise of gaining community support for theatre where there was none prior to the ELT Project.

It is also clear that the Project attained, but unevenly, its objective of influencing the ways the schools teach dramatic literature. Comparisons between the three sites are always dangerous, since they were so different, and it is hard to generalize about a sample of three. But the weight of the evidence presented in this volume is that the Project in Rhode Island, by the standards of educational innovations generally, was a phenomenal success. The Project in New Orleans had less impact, with the theatre tending to sink to the level of curriculum, rather than the schools rising to the level of art. In Los

Angeles, the theatre's work was not consistently good and the disproportion between the Project and its environment was so great that the measurable impact of the Project upon the schools was smaller than in the other sites. (The social impact of The Inner City Cultural Center is another matter, and the returns are not in yet.) In the remainder of this chapter, we will try to comment on those aspects of the Project that we feel contributed most importantly to its successes and its failures. We will first identify the features of the Project that seem to us to have been of primary importance and, in passing, outline some positive recommendations for steps to be taken in setting up future school-theatre programs, so as to avoid the more serious difficulties that the ELT Project encountered. Then we will deal at greater length with the features of the Project we have identified as important. Since each of the parts of the Project constantly interacted with and affected all the others, the latter discussion must involve shuttling back and forth between topics and some repetition. Finally, we will present a list of recommendations addressed to sponsors of future school-theatre programs.

* * * * *

The first point that we wish to make is that the single most serious error that was made in the planning of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project was the decision to relate the program to the existing high school English curriculum, since this arrangement led to the schools' perceiving the theatre's function as a very narrow one and involved educators in strictly artistic decisions. The theatre should function to introduce new ways of thinking about curriculum, not be subordinated to what already exists and is manifestly unsatisfactory to almost everyone. Since plays are taught in English classes, and since virtually all students take English, the relationship must have seemed a logical one, but it was, in practice, the single most important obstacle to the Project's having a real impact upon the educational process.

The implications of relating the program to the English curriculum were not thoroughly enough explored prior to the actual establishment of the Project, and, to the end of avoiding similar errors in the future, our second observation must be that the planners of the Project drew too little upon the expertise of people with experience in running arts and theatre programs in the public schools. The Advisory Committee to the ELT Project was established relatively late, little relied on, and would have been allowed to lapse for lack of funds had not CEMREL undertaken its support. Our suggestion would be that a similarly constituted Advisory Committee should be founded early in the planning stages of future programs, and its members employed full time and given adequate staff support, so that they might take an active role in shaping the plan of the program. This Committee, we believe, should be given major responsibility for selecting locations for programs, for selling the program to local officials, for involving local officials actively in the planning of the program, for selecting the artistic directors and/or companies to take part in the program, and for finding and appointing a "producer"--a respected theatre person who will commit himself to act, throughout the program, as advisor and consultant and court of last resort for both the theatres and the schools involved.

The Advisory Committee also might be consulted, very early in the planning process, about such things as the scope of the program, the elements of its educational program,[1] and the sorts of knowledge that researchers should try to gain in the course of the program.

This use of a committee of experienced professionals representing the arts and education and experienced with the problems of coordinating the two sorts of activities would, we believe, minimize the number of unanticipated difficulties which would later arise to plague the program, particularly if it were clear that the Advisors' first responsibility was thoroughly to familiarize themselves with the histories of all previous similar programs.

The Advisory Committee might not, however, be the best qualified to give advice on two other aspects of a school-theatre program, which were not much considered in the planning of the ELT Project, but which turned out to be of vital importance. These are (1) the setting up of a system of checks and balances so that neither party to a program has the power to coerce the other into acceptance of its own desires and (2) the establishment, well prior to funding, of a clear and simple set of accounting procedures drawn up in full knowledge of the economic nature of a resident theatre operation.

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[1] Observation of four years of the Project in operation has convinced us that presentation of plays, no matter how fine they may be, is not, by itself, enough to bring about a basic or widespread change in the process of education in the schools. If one desires to have a shaping influence upon education, in the direction of opening it to the arts and humanizing it, he will be dissatisfied with the merely presentational approach of the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. And he will want the teachers and students to be more extensively involved and the artists to take a much more active role in the educational process. He will insist that the "educational services" offered to the schools be, not a fillip or an afterthought, as they sometimes were in the ELT Project, but on a par with the plays, receiving as much emphasis and as much talent as the theatre productions themselves. That is to say, there are other models beside the ELT for a school-theatre program. The fourth volume of the present report surveys and evaluates some of these, and the reader is referred there. For the rest of this discussion, however, we will be dealing with programs such as the ELT which center about high school student attendance at the theatre.

Let us now go on to discuss in more detail these points and their relationships with one another and with the success of the Project. We have stated, flatly, that the gravest single weakness of the conception of the Project, in practice at least, was in the tying down of the Project to the English curriculum, because making the ELT an "English" program narrowed its impact on the schools, involved the schools in making artistic policy, and led directly to the two most persistent and disruptive conflicts between school and theatre personnel: those involving play selection and censorship.

We would recommend that, in programs which involve the presentation of plays to secondary students, it be made clear that the plays are being given to all students and all teachers in the participating schools, and that all teachers be helped and encouraged in every way to make use of the plays as educational and cultural and curricular resources. But, while all possible assistance should be given to the teachers in capitalizing upon the opportunity to share the theatre experience with their students, great care should be taken so that no administrator or group of teachers has the idea that the theatre is just part of the curriculum and therefore subject to the same sorts of processes that work in a school to establish a curriculum.

One of the most important reasons to avoid tying a program to the curriculum is that the artistic director and his staff must be given exclusive and absolute control over all matters within their professional competence, and things must be arranged so this can be so.

This recommendation is not made lightly nor in ignorance of the problems of school officials, who may be called upon to answer to their superiors or to the public for the contents of any non-voluntary program in which students are included. The school curriculum, everywhere, desperately needs, as much as "art," more contact with reality and with the world of work. The professional theatre has unparalled resources for dealing with real-life problems; it is real world enterprise that has extraordinary rich potential as an educational resource, since it deals professionally with much of the same matter as the schools and makes use of methods from which teachers have much to learn. Theatre is not only a creative art in itself, it is, routinely, interdisciplinary and synthetic not only of all the other arts but of politics, culture, and technology as well. Beyond what they can teach directly and through their art, gifted directors, actors, and technicians can offer to students and teachers sorely needed living examples of what is meant by professional competence, dedication, and self-discipline.

The principal authors of these conclusions are speaking as educators and, in fact, as English teachers, when they say that giving teachers or school administrators the power to dictate artistic policy--or even to consult and bargain about it--can, and in practice almost certainly will, effectively prevent a theatre from making the contributions to education it is uniquely qualified to make. This will be true whether the schools actually exercise their power (as they did during the ELT Project in Los Angeles) or whether the simple existence of the power intimidates and dispirits the artistic director (as happened in New Orleans).

(The reader is referred to Dr. Georg Stern's report on the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project in Los Angeles--Volume Three of this Report--for documentation of our contention that giving the schools power to influence artistic decisions can be disastrous, that documentation being the more persuasive to the extent that Dr. Stern elaborately justifies the actions of the schools.)

Let us remind the reader that, unlike the case with the WPA theatre of the 1930s, there was extraordinarily little interference with the Project from Washington, remarkably little effort on the part of the funding agencies to influence artistic policy.[2] The problem of bureaucratic intrusion into artistic areas was a local one. As the Project was set up, the schools were invited to involve themselves in artistic policy by (1) the explicitly "curricular" nature of the ELT Project and (2) by the schools' power to withhold from the theatres funds without which the theatres could not survive. The extent to which this power was exercised differed greatly between the three sites, and the artistic quality and the educational impact of the Project was inversely related to the extent of school involvement in the decision-making process--the more the involvement, the lower the quality. Although we cannot demonstrate that the relationship was a causal one, we believe that, in large part, it was.[3]

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[2] The GAO investigation of the Los Angeles Project was, apparently, unconnected with the content of the Project. Aside from occasional suggestions--never enforced--the only overt intrusion by Washington was on the occasion that ICCC in Los Angeles had to promise to work to improve the quality of its shows. Even this action may best be interpreted as supportive, since the promise helped to persuade the Los Angeles school authorities to continue with the Project.

[3] It is, of course, possible for the play selection and directorial functions to be successfully separated, and not only in the commercial theatre (where a producer may acquire a literary property and then seek out an artistic director). The Moscow Art Theatre, to take just one example, was originally (1897) set up so that Nemirovich-Danchenko had the final word on all "literary" matters while Stanislavski had a veto power over all matters of artistic interpretation. This can work only when the artistic director has faith in the superior qualifications of the literary expert, a situation which is unlikely ever to obtain where the literary "expert" is a teacher or panel of teachers rather than someone with a record of accomplishments in the professional theatre.

In Rhode Island, Adrian Hall was given, after the first year, almost complete freedom from review by the schools. There were several reasons why this was the case. Hall made it very clear that he would withdraw his company from the Project rather than share his directorial prerogatives, but he listened to and tried to accomodate all reasonable criticisms and suggestions. Rose Vallely, the Educational Coordinator during the last two years of Project Discovery, did not fancy herself qualified to participate in artistic decisions, and there was a clear distinction made between artistic and educational responsibilities. The availability to Hall of another theatre, in which to do plays for adult audiences, enabled him to avoid conflicts without compromise, since he could produce in the small theatre those plays he felt that he and his company needed to do, but which might cause disruptive controversy if done for students. Furthermore, perhaps partly as a result of the freedom he was given to experiment, he began to give the teachers and students participating in Project Discovery theatrical experiences that were much more than "illustrations of the text" and which educators saw were awakening many students to the "relevance" of drama and literature.

It is likely, though, when all these things have been said, that the most important single factor in Rhode Island was not Hall's integrity or his company's talent or Rose Vallely's technical skill or the educational community's openness, but the lack of a massive centralized educational bureaucracy. There were more than thirty separate school systems in the state. A largely ceremonial committee of superintendents was responsible for the educational oversight of the Project, and its actual administration, from 1966 through the 1968-69 season, was in the hands of the Providence schools. There was no easy way that any one person or small group could exert irresistable pressure upon the artistic director, either directly or through the Educational Coordinator. Even when (as once happened) a school superintendent withdrew his system from participation in the Project because he had moral objections to one of the plays, the impact on the Project was negligible, and the objector, rather than being placated, was ridiculed in the newspapers. Had the director's judgments been so bad, of course, that a really significant number of school systems complained, that would have been another matter, and the school-theatre conflicts typical of the other sites would have--and should have--occurred. As it was, with the schools and the theatre in positions of near-parity, both the parties had a chance to learn about one another and to make the necessary accomodations without either party's integrity being violated. And the results speak for themselves.

In New Orleans, where the Project was managed through the New Orleans schools, the schools seldom directly used their power to try to influence a directorial decision. But Stuart Vaughan, though he made a show of retaining play selection as his personal prerogative, chose plays that were, for the most part, the ones that teachers invariably mentioned when they were asked to nominate plays--i.e., old chestnuts, plays that were textbook standards. And the productions that were given the plays were often the illustrative sort with which the most conservative teachers would be most happy. This prevented both major confrontations and the breaking of new ground, educationally or artistically; but it did not prevent a progression of small and nasty disputes between school and theatre personnel which did great harm to the Project. The directorial conservatism was in part a function of Vaughan's tastes and in part a function of his awareness of the power of the schools to deprive him of his theatre and his income. The series of petty disputes was directly a function of the Project's having been advertised as a "curriculum" program, so that the educators had the expectation that they would have a voice in all aspects of it.

Another effect of the "curriculum" emphasis in New Orleans (in the absence of a second theatre in which the company could play for adult audiences) was to type Repertory Theatre, New Orleans as an educational or a children's theatre. Probably because he hoped that once he had worked out his contract with the schools the repertory theatre could establish itself with an adult audience, Stuart Vaughan did not choose to make a firm stand against the domination of the theatre by the schools. But the consequence of this acquiescence was, in the opinions of the Advisory Committee and of disappointed admirers of Vaughan's earlier work in New York and Seattle, a dull and conventional program that, though it was what the schools wanted, did not serve either the community or the students well.

In Los Angeles, where the theatre, for all practical purposes, was dealing with a single massive bureaucracy, and where there was no one strong artistic director after Gregory's departure, the schools virtually took over control of all aspects of the Project, invoking as often as necessary the threat to kill the whole Project by withdrawing school participation if the schools did not get their own way. Jack Jackson, who, in the absence of a continuing artistic director, represented the theatre's interests, was interested primarily in the establishment of the Inner City Cultural Center, to the health of which, during the early stages, the ELT Project was essential. He was, moreover, not primarily a theatre person, so he may not have felt so strongly the violation of his company's professional integrity by the schools as, say, an Adrian Hall or a Stuart Vaughan would have. The schools, as it were, held both the ICCC and the repertory company as hostage, and Jackson was never willing to sacrifice the dream of the ICCC for the sake of protecting the honor of the theatre company. With less at stake, or with a director devoted wholly to his art, it is unlikely that a serious artist would have continued to work under the conditions that prevailed in Los Angeles.

The key to the problem is in the compulsory nature of participation in a program, since even an administrator who understands the theatre's need for autonomy cannot legally enter into a contractual agreement by which he gives up responsibility for the contents of a program in which students are involuntarily involved. We would not recommend involving only certain predetermined categories of students in a program. At least until everyone has a chance to learn what theatre has to offer, a program should ideally include all students and teachers in the participating schools. Observers have agreed that it is precisely the students and teachers who have most to gain from participation in a theatre (or other arts) program who would be least likely to participate in it voluntarily. So, to begin with, a program may have to be compulsory and cautious.[4] But the goal should be to move as quickly as possible in the direction of making the program voluntary and experimental. The problem of reconciling the schools' legal responsibility with the theatre's need for artistic autonomy is not one to be solved by prescriptive clauses in a contract, but only by education, familiarity, and mutual trust. Many of the commentators quoted earlier in this volume ascribed the success of Project Discovery in Rhode Island to the fact that the Trinity Square company had been established in Providence for several years prior to the Project and had, not only its own artistic identity, but a good local reputation, with theatre-going segments of the community and also with the schools, on the basis of student performances done under a foundation grant.

It may be that a period of time must pass between the founding of a theatre company and its involvement with the schools on a massive basis. During this period, while the theatre is establishing itself and the theatre personnel are becoming familiar with the sorts of students with whom they will be working, there can be increasingly frequent contacts between the company and the educators and students. During this period, while the two organizations are learning about one another and how to work together, the artistic director will have the chance to show whether he is worthy of the implicit trust that we have urged he must be given. If he is, and if the educational powers are convinced both of his good judgment and of the value of his product to the students, they should be, thereafter, as willing to defend his creative freedom against the censors and the blue-stockings as they would be to defend one of their own teachers against unreasonable criticisms. Beyond that, it is all up to the director's good taste and sureness of touch.

In any case, if the schools and the theatre face one another as equals, with neither having any coercive power over the other, the chances are much greater that decisions will not be reached which are humiliating to anyone or artistically and educationally disastrous. To this end, though we will not presume to make detailed suggestions about financial arrangements, we would recommend that the schools involved in any future school-theatre project should have no control of any funds needed for the operation of the theatre itself. Rather, perhaps, bank accounts could be set up from which monies would be periodically disbursed to the theatre company on the basis of actual costs and anticipated student attendance. Perhaps, in order to make the theatre responsive to the school box office, there could be a sliding scale of payments for student admissions, so that the theatre's income would be cut (but not abolished) if there were an important drop-off in student attendance and augmented if there were a rise in student attendance. And, perhaps, there should be, from a similar account, payments directly to the school for each student who attends a play. The schools should, of course, have direct control of the funds needed to carry out their end of the program, and, probably, they should have a measure of control over the funds for the educational services which the theatre will provide the schools. The idea, whatever the arrangements, is to give the schools a carrot, by which they can influence theatre policy like any other public, but to take away their stick.

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[4] Almost everyone has agreed that Vaughan's choice of Charley's Aunt to inaugurate the Project in New Orleans was good strategy. Not only should light fare or plays to which students can easily relate be considered to introduce a program, but, since new students and teachers will be joining a program each year, perhaps such plays should open each season.

Now let us make a more tentative recommendation, related also to our criticism of treating the Project as "curriculum." The original conception of the ELT Project called for it to stage "classic" plays for masses of students.[5] It seems to us that there are grounds for questionning the limitation of a program to "classic" plays. If the object of a school-theatre program is to give students something important that they are not already getting, it is better to leave a great deal of flexibility as regards the content and style of the presentations and the other aspects of the program. A good case has been made by many critics for the proposition that naturalistic, illustrative theatre is hardly worth perpetuating. The films do that sort of thing so much better that there is little chance that, by themselves, the presence of live actors and the interactivity of the theatre experience can justify live drama to youngsters who have grown up with Cinemascope and Cinerama. And a good case can be made for the proposition that if educators are completely comfortable with what the theatre does, or find it familiar, the theatre is giving students little they are not already getting.

We would recommend that, so far as the formal, presentational aspects of a school-theatre program are concerned, the emphasis be put upon the uniquely theatrical experience and upon the varieties of theatrical experiences. The title of a play chosen and its period and its author should be of very little moment, once the idea has been gotten rid of that the plays are being done so they can be coordinated with the existing English curriculum. In this regard, we will simply point to Adrian Hall's productions of Billy Budd and Lovecraft's Follies and to the interracial casting of the plays at ICCC and Trinity Square as examples of the sorts of experiments that should be taking place continuously if a theatre program is to have maximum educational impact.

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[5] The specification of plays of established literary merit was taken by many educators as also a specification of traditional presentations of those plays.

Now let us move back to the matter of characteristics of the site that may influence the course of a school-theatre project. The most important of these are the size of the population served and the degree of centralization of the school system or systems to be served. Both the Rhode Island and New Orleans projects served populations of such a size that all the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students in the area could take part in the Project each year. In Los Angeles, approximately the same number of students were served, but they represented only one half of one grade of high school students. The sheer disproportion between the Project and the school population in Los Angeles minimized the chances that the Project could have any significant impact upon such things as the curriculum or teaching methods. The decision, in Los Angeles, to have the same group of students participate each year meant that very few teachers were in any way involved in the Project for more than one year, and this too helped to reduce the Project's impact. It was, it seems, politically impossible to restrict the Project to, say, areas with large concentrations of non-white students; but some such restriction clearly was called for in order to establish some proportionality between population and project and to make some continuity of experiences possible. Perhaps, in a large urban area, the best solution (short of establishing a dozen theatre companies) would be to choose ten or a dozen schools at random to participate. This would be as defensible, surely, as choosing one-half of a grade, and would increase the chances of a program's having an impact. Such a procedure would also offer the possibility of having a waiting list of schools, one of which could become a participant at any time that a participating school for some reason wished to forego attendance at a particular play.

A more serious problem with a large urban center as a site for a school-theatre project is the sheer size of bureaucracies of the school systems in central cities. Unless the managers of such a school system have themselves chosen to initiate a program or have been deeply convinced of its value to their students, so that they will let the program operate largely outside of the system's rules, it will be extremely difficult to establish an effective program in such an environment. But arts programs, and theatre programs specifically, are operating successfully in large cities, and on the artists' own terms. These programs, however--Marcelle Felser's Vanguard Project in Pittsburgh, Bob Alexander's group from Arena Theatre in Washington, or Frank Wittow's Academy Theatre in Atlanta, to take just three examples--are typically outgrowths of long processes of evolution in the local community, and it is by no means certain there is any easy way to make a successful transplant either of people or programs from one locale to another.

We have already suggested that the most important factor in determining the success or failure of a school-theatre program is the artistic director himself. There is no bill of specifications for an artistic director for a school-theatre program beyond talent and the ability to attract and hold together a company of talented actors and artists.[6] Probably he should be someone who has a record of accomplishments but is still on the way up. It would be nice if he had a social conscience and was highly motivated toward education,[7] but his talent must be the first consideration, and it is probably enough that he does not hate children, and has staff members who are motivated to work with students.

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[6] There are, of course, many descriptions of the qualifications of the ideal artistic director, just as there are similar lists of the qualifications of the ideal teacher. It seems uncontroversial to suggest that, although a good director and a good teacher have much in common, one's being a good teacher does not qualify him to force his opinions upon a trained theatre artist. The following is Stanislavski's description of a director's requisite accomplishments. We would recommend that the paragraph also describes the minimal accomplishments of one who would aspire to telling a director how to do his job.

> The theatre, which performs a cultural mission, demands of the persons engaged in it very much. To be the director of such an establishment one must be a talented expert in his own field, that is, understand art not only as a critic, but as an actor, a stage director, a producer, a literateur, and administrator. One must know the theatre not only theoretically, but practically. One must know the construction of the stage, the architecture of the theatre itself; one must know the psychology of the mob, understand the nature and the psychology of the actor, the conditions of his creative work and life; one must have a wide literary education, tact, sensitivity, breeding, restraint, mind, administrative abilities and much, much more. It is seldom that all these qualities are met within one person. (My Life in Art, p. 293.)

[7] At one stage in our discussions, a staff member suggested the hiring procedure should be this: you interview all potential directors and offer to give them unheard of sums of money on the condition that they do exactly as they are told. Then you hire the ones that throw you out of their offices.

The artistic directors of the companies that took part in the ELT Project were chosen by what might be called "the normal political processes," and we cannot be at all certain that a more orderly or objective system of selection would be more successful. (In fact, the opposite might be the case. At least one expert, early in the Project, was arguing that Adrian Hall should be gotten rid of in favor of someone with "a bigger name.") But an Advisory Committee of artists and educators, if they took time off from their regular jobs and were supplied with an adequate staff, and if they were to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the histories of all earlier school-theatre enterprises, might be able to effectively seek out and screen likely candidates.

Perhaps next to the artistic director in importance is the person who coordinates such a project for the schools. It is true that some of the most successful of the school-theatre programs that have operated recently did so without any such liaison in the schools. But it seems to us that if the theatre is to be something more than an interlude or just part of the English curriculum, there is a great need for someone, thoroughly familiar with the ways schools operate and locally respected as an educator, to take primary responsibility for encouraging teachers and students to make the most of the opportunities the theatre offers them. (In the Guthrie's Theatre program, key teachers are given only half a normal course load and paid to spend half their time with the theatre company. This seems to be an excellent idea. See Volume Four of this report for details.) This person need not be familiar with theatre, though he should be open and flexible and value the arts. And he need not necessarily have to concern himself with developing "curriculum materials," a job better left to a scholarly member of the theatre company or to an educational theatre specialist.[8] This coordinator, perhaps more than the director himself, can win support from educators for the director, if the director's work is artistically excellent and valued by students.

This coordinator's personal characteristics can no more be specified in advance than can be the director's; aside from what has already been mentioned, the only indispensable attribute is a clear understanding that he is not to make suggestions to the director on artistic matters.

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[8] Some of the portfolios of curriculum materials that were prepared for teachers were, as we have said elsewhere, superior to anything available commercially. But the mere presence of conventional curriculum materials--even fine ones--can inhibit the sorts of changes that can come about from the collaboration of educators and professional theatre artists. Teachers will want and will welcome assistance in capitalizing on the opportunities offered by a theatre program. But great care should be taken to assure that materials and training programs do not delimit possibilities or narrowly prescribe what teachers may "properly" do. Attention should also be given to the preparation of materials to be given directly to students, rather than to their teachers.

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Below, in conclusion of this chapter and of this volume of the report, the reader will find a list of recommendations, which we hope will be seriously considered by anyone who is contemplating a school-theatre program or preparing a proposal for one. The recommendations are those upon which all members of the CEMREL staff agree, and those which we think are of basic importance to the successful operation of a project bringing the professional theatre into collaboration with the schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The idea of lending support to regional theatres by way of giving them an educational function is a sound and ingenious one, which can if properly handled both improve the climate of the arts and help to revitalize the schools. The types of relationships pioneered in the ELT Project should continue to be explored and encouraged. From the theatre's point of view, such arrangements may be a way to free regional theatres from dependence on the whims of the local rich and subservience to the taste of the local middle class.

2. The word "Laboratory" in the title of the ELT Project was a misnomer and there was no consistent emphasis upon experimentation either in the theatres or the schools. Future projects should strive to be Laboratory Theatres in something the same sense that the term is used to describe Grotowski's establishment, and a premium should be based not only upon experimental productions, but upon finding new ways to involve students and educators actively in drama and actors and theatre artists actively in education.

3. Future theatre programs should not be tied to the English curriculum, and perhaps not to the curriculum at all, for reasons already adequately spelled out.

4. Future programs should not be rushed into. Adequate time should be allowed for planning all aspects of the programs and for involving local people in the planning process. An Advisory Committee of persons experienced in successful school-theatre collaborations should be established at the very start and given major responsibilities for all decisions throughout the process of planning and establishing the programs.

5. Funding should be guaranteed to the programs, for at least a three year period, but preferably longer, subject only to annual review by the Advisory Committee or by a "producer" who shall be appointed by and succeed the Advisory Committee. Clear-cut accounting procedures should be established prior to the opening of the Project by an expert in theatre operations, and the funding agencies should take the responsibility for training the managers of each theatre company in these procedures. Ways should be found to disburse funds which will enable the schools to influence theatre policy through the box office, but which will give them no power over funds needed to maintain the solvency of the theatre companies. Perhaps the amount of funding should

be gradually reduced each year, as an incentive to promote the programs locally.

6. The schools should be required gradually to begin to assume support of some of the educational services offered by the theatres. The theatres should similarly be required to show progress toward developing community support. There should be provided to the theatre both funds and access to expert advisors to assist in promoting the theatre in the community.

7. The contracts governing the school-theatre programs should be as open-ended and flexible as it is legally possible to make them, so that the programs may be shaped to fit the communities and so that what is learned by experience may be used to improve the programs at once.

8. It will be clearly understood by the school officials that, after they have accepted an artistic director and his company, perhaps following a "probationary" period during which the theatre and the schools work together informally and in small ways, the schools will have no power to review, censor, or revise any decision made by the artistic director or to select or suggest plays. On the other hand, the schools should have considerable involvement in planning and carrying out the educational aspects of the programs. We would suggest that, although attendance at plays will be compulsory at first and voluntary later, the involvement of theatre personnel in the educational process should proceed in the other direction, with those teachers and students who are most motivated toward drama being involved first, on a voluntary and elective basis, and with other teachers and students becoming involved as they are ready. The ultimate objective would be for all teachers and students in the schools to work in some ways with the theatre personnel or with teachers and students who have developed special skills.

9. All school-theatre programs should have research components. The research funds should not be allocated only by the funding agencies but some portion of them should be given to the theatres and the schools as well, so that either of these agencies can commission studies or surveys for its own purposes. The emphasis should, we would suggest, be less upon a conventional evaluation of the programs (let the Advisory Committee do that) than on audience development, on basic investigations of the educational processes in the arts, and on problem-centered research studies designed specifically to improve the programs themselves.

10. There should be a single person appointed by the schools to serve as coordinator of the educational aspects of each program. This person should be primarily a technician, whose full time is devoted to the

program, and who is outside of the bureaucratic hierarchy of the school system and answerable only to the school board or the superintendent. It is important that this person set out to involve key school personnel--and particularly building principals and departmental chairmen--actively inthe program at the very earliest possible date.

11. If the theatre company taking part in a program is not already established, it must either be given several years to establish its own identity and to feel out a viable working relationship with the schools, or, if a long period of preparation is not feasible, it must be well enough subsidized that it can play different seasons simultaneously to student and adult audiences.

12. The theatre artists must be involved intimately and regularly with educational personnel and with students, and the educational work of the theatre company must be given as much emphasis as its productions, even if this means reducing the number of plays presented to student audiences. Similarly, educators must become personally involved with the theatre artists and their work, even if this means releasing them from teaching duties occasionally.

13. The artistic director of the theatre company is the most important person in a school-theatre project. He must be carefully chosen by persons who are professionally qualified to judge both his directorial competence and the possibilities of his working well in an educational setting. He should be given the time to learn about the schools while they are learning about theatre.

14. The artistic director cannot concern himself too much with the operation of the educational program and still do justice to his primary responsibility in the theatre. His company should include, however, talented and competent people to whom much of the management of the theatre's educational work can be delegated. These people should probably be young, with directorial ambitions, and with the desire to work with young people.

15. A large urban school system will be less flexible and harder to work with than a collection of smaller rural or suburban schools. But the large urban schools are perhaps more desperately in need of the sort of revitalization the theatre can offer. What is essential is that the accomodations necessary to permit a school-theatre program to operate in an urban setting be worked out to the full satisfaction of all parties before a program is initiated. This process can probably be greatly facilitated by allowing local officials the freedom to alter the basic plan of the program to fit their local circumstances, within the limits suggested earlier.

16. In a large urban area, there must be a proportionality between the program and its clientele. This means either that there must be several theatre companies or that only a fraction of the schools in a system will participate. The continuation in a program from year to year of the same teachers and students is essential to its having an influence upon the educational process. If local law or custom does

not permit focussing a program on a particular population or geographical subdistrict, the participating schools should be chosen by lot from all over the district.

17. Although in-service training and special materials for teachers should be part of the program, more emphasis should be put on communication directly from the theatre company to students and their parents. Perhaps a newsletter, mailed directly to the homes of participating students, could be produced, containing news not only of the local company, but of theatre activity across the world.

18. Experimentation should constantly be carried out on ways to get students to the theatre or to theatre-sponsored activities outside of school hours. The concern here is not only to relieve school officials of worries about the content of a nonvoluntary program, but to make the theatre experiences both more extensive and more authentic. The effort to involve students in theatre should not, of course, be confined to the theatre taking part in a program, but should extend to high school, college, community, and other professional theatre groups.

19. It is unrealistic, to judge from the experience of the ELT Project, to expect a newly established company and a school-theatre collaboration to become so firmly established in three years as to be self-supporting. More time is needed to build a community base for the theatre, and it may be unrealistic to expect any regional theatre ever again to be self-supporting. The option for indefinite renewal of subsidies to the theatre should be left open. There should be explorations of the possibilities of setting up perpetual endowments for regional theatres, the income from which would give the theatres a minimal stability, and the principal of which would revert to the government if the theatre closed.